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**Books for the Heart**

*Edited by* ALEXANDER SMELLIE, M.A.

QUIET HOURS



“*Quiet Hours*” was published originally in 1857. Three further editions were published between 1857 and 1880, after which the book was suffered to drop out of print. In March 1897 the present reprint was prepared under the Author’s supervision, and in October of the same year a second edition was called for.

# QUIET HOURS

By JOHN PULSFORD D.D.



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## INTRODUCTION

IN this series of Books, for the Heart it is not intended to include the writings of those who are still with us. That is not because our generation is lacking in seers and saints—men and women who, like the apostle, have been caught up into the third heaven, and have listened there to the very words of God. The world in these days is too much with many of us ; but there remain in our midst some over whom the world is powerless to cast its spells, and who bring us messages of infinite moment out of the unseen and eternal. But in the past, whether more remote or more recent, there have been so many who understood the secret of the Lord, and who told to others as much of it as could be uttered, that the difficulty is to choose amongst them, without adding to their number the King's envoys and spokesmen of to-day. For this reason it has seemed best to limit these Cardiphonia—voices of the innermost spirit of man when it has been quickened and taught by the Spirit of God—to a few of the noblest and deepest books of older years than our own.

Yet a single exception is made in favour of the *Quiet Hours* of Dr. John Pulsford, happily spared to us still in God's goodness. All who have sat down under the shadow of these meditations—a tranquillising and invigorating shadow — will rejoice to renew their

friendship with them and with their author. And it is hoped that many, to whom the book has hitherto been inaccessible, will discover its refreshment and uplifting and delight. For it is like the Tree of Life in the midst of the Paradise which St. John saw. It bears many different fruits, and its leaves are for the healing of our souls.

Dr. Pulsford is a mystic of the nineteenth century; as genuine a mystic as Jacob Böhme was in the seventeenth. His soul dwells in "the Super-sensual Life," of which the shoemaker of Görlitz had so much to say, and has "attained to divine Hearing and Vision." It is strange that one whose lot has been cast in great cities, with all their haste and distraction, should yet have moved so habitually and unswervingly among the heavenly realities which transcend the sights and sounds of our lower world. For nineteen years Dr. Pulsford was minister of the Gospel in Hull, then for five years in London, then for a second term of nineteen years in Edinburgh; and, since 1886, he has lived again in London. The business and the tumult have always been close beside him; but they have never once touched his spirit, or drawn away his allegiance from the sublimest themes and the profoundest mysteries of the Kingdom. We think of him as belonging to the same family with Mr. Browning's Lazarus. He is "witless of the size, the sum, the value in proportion of all things, or whether it be little or be much." For he holds on firmly to "the spiritual life around the earthly life; his heart and brain move there, his feet stay here."

The mysticism is most recognisable in his later books. Let us record the titles of the most important among them:—*The Supremacy of Man; Christ and His Seed,*

being an exposition of the Epistle to the Ephesians ; *Morgenröthe ; Infoldings and Unfoldings of the Divine Genius in Nature and Man ; Our Deathless Hope ; Loyalty to Christ*, of which there were two series ; and, last of all, *Stray Thoughts of a Lifetime*. Each of these is a mine where the diamonds and rubies lie. But each needs an education of the heart, if it is to be appreciated at its proper worth.

The *Quiet Hours*, Dr. Pulsford's earliest work, given to the world while he was still a young minister in Hull, is simpler in its character. It appeals to all lovers of our God and His Christ—to everyone who shares the sympathies and the sorrows and the joys of the Saviour. It rings with familiar evangelical music, though it is seldom indeed that the music is played with such consummate skill and such thrilling and melting power. It is a book to ripen and deepen and refine the secret life in each of us. Yet the disciple and intimate will discern in its pages the germs of some of Dr. Pulsford's most distinctive tenets. Here is that high and hopeful view of humanity so characteristic of him. Here, too, in outline at least, is that favourite truth of the Motherhood of God, to which he returns again and again with a lingering wistfulness and satisfaction in his subsequent books. Already he had begun to unfold the special "burden of the Lord" which was committed to him.

It is the First Series of the *Quiet Hours* which, with Dr. Pulsford's approval, is given to the reader in this volume. A Second Series, conceived on similar lines, and fragrant with the same odours of the better country, was published two years later. It is hard for us to believe—it shows us how far the Church has grown in comprehension and charity—that the teaching enunciated

in such books should have brought on their author the suspicion of heresy. Yet so it was. Dr. Pulsford was under the necessity of leaving his first sphere of work in Hull, and of establishing a new congregation. He was then, and has continued since, a Nonconformist. But it is significant of his catholicity of mind, and of his anxiety to be only where he could accomplish the largest amount of service for Christ and human souls, that in those days, when men who should have been brothers fighting at his side the good fight, misunderstood him and held aloof, he felt almost disposed to throw in his lot with the Church of England; not because of special sympathy with its ecclesiastical position, but from the conviction that within its borders he was likely to find a larger number spiritually akin with himself, to whom his message would be welcome. These undeserved doubts soon passed, however; and, amongst those most eager in after years to confess his Christliness, his insight into the hidden things of God, the grandeur of his belief and his life, were some of the men who had originally misinterpreted and suspected him. Perhaps this early experience has helped to foster and intensify that freedom from denominationalism and from sectional and party spirit which is one of Dr. Pulsford's most marked features. He would subscribe heartily Jacob Böhme's sentence: "The holy man hath his Church about him everywhere, even in himself; for he always standeth and walketh, sitteth and lieth down in his Church. He liveth in the true Christian Church; yea, in the Temple of Christ; the Holy Ghost preacheth to him out of every creature. Whatsoever he looketh upon, he seeth a preacher of God therein."

Students of this little book will understand something of the affection which bound those who listened to

Dr. Pulsford's spoken sermons to their teacher. Of this under-shepherd, as of the Good Shepherd Himself, it might be truly said that "he called his own sheep by name, and led them out; and he went before them, and the sheep followed him; for they knew his voice; and a stranger would they not follow." We are certain that every sympathetic reader will be struck not merely by the inwardness and loftiness of the writer's thought, but by the exquisite beauty of the style. There is a limpid clearness, an instinctive and inevitable selection of the right word, a delicacy and majesty of phrasing, which remind us of a very different author—we mean Mr. Robert Louis Stevenson. Dr. Pulsford might, if he had coveted the honour, have been one of the masters in English literature.

To him in his fresh and gracious age we are tempted to apply that subtle saying of Swedenborg, with whom he has many affinities, that the oldest angels are at the same time the youngest. Or there are some words of his own, in this book, which portray him to the life: "At a considerable depth from the withered face, the spirit abides young and genial as spring flowers, and serene as the everlasting stars; and only touch the right chord, and you shall see the spirit come forth, and spread the sunshine of youth over the furrows of age. It is not in the power of centuries or millenniums to write one mark of age on the soul where Jesus is."

More must not be written about one who, in the completeness of his humility, would fain be forgotten if only the truth he proclaims is remembered and laid to heart. In a private letter, which reveals the manner of man he is, he says: "*Personally*, I could not wish any reference to the selfhood of the writer of *Quiet Hours*. Our individuality is a narrow place, which walls out,



while it receives the Immensity — the sweetly tender Infinite. We must more and more go forth from our walls and doors into the open, grand, varied, impartial, universal Presence of the living Lover of us all, who is One Harmonic Fulness—the ‘All in the all.’ In Him, therefore, we are divided from no one and from no thing. If in any degree I can be a Voice of One crying in the wilderness of lost souls—‘Repent ye,’ that you may make ready your ground for the insowing and inweaving of your immortal, incorrupt humanity from the manhood of God—what Joy! and what a Reward! both for speaker and hearer, for writer and reader.”

A. S.

*March 1897.*

## NOTE TO SECOND EDITION.

Since the publication, in the early spring of the present year, of the First Edition of this reprint, Dr. Pulsford has passed from the lower to the upper room in the Father's House. He died in his native Devonshire, whither he had gone for a short season of change and rest, in the month of May. Those who are familiar with his writings, and those whose great privilege it was to know the man himself, are sure that for him there could be no element of surprise in the transition from earth to heaven; he was at home in the better country before his feet touched its shores. There are a few elect souls that feel through the longest life the “bright shoots of everlastingness,” which Henry Vaughan tells us are experienced for the most part only by the children; and John Pulsford's was one of these souls.

A. S.

*October 1897.*

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## THE APOSTLES' CREED

*I believe in God the Father Almighty,  
Maker of heaven and earth :*

*And in Jesus Christ His only Son our  
Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy  
Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary, Suffered  
under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, dead,  
and buried, He descended into hell ; The  
third day He rose again from the dead ;  
He ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the  
right hand of God the Father Almighty ;  
From thence He shall come to judge the  
quick and the dead.*

*I believe in the Holy Ghost ; The holy  
Catholick Church ; The Communion of  
Saints ; The Forgiveness of sins ; The  
Resurrection of the body, And the life  
everlasting. Amen.*

## THE AUTHOR'S CONFESSION OF FAITH

WHETHER the Apostles drew up this Creed or not, everyone must feel that it eminently deserves its title, "*The Apostles' Creed*." It certainly *is* their Creed; that is, it expresses the sum and substance of the Apostolic writings. It is our Christian Religion, given and presented, in nineteen short sentences of very plain words. It is full, as a skeleton of New Testament Theology; and it is most wisely concise and simple, from the absence of detail and definition.

Reverently do I receive it, and thoroughly do I believe it. I greatly admire it also, for this reason: it expresses no man's opinion, it gives no man's explanation. It simply records the facts of our Religion, without either accounting for them or deciding in what particular manner they shall be held. Account for the facts as you will, explain them as you will, draw what inferences from them you like,—*these are the facts*; and "they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture."

Upon the basis of these facts you can build a Roman Church, a Greek Church, or a Reformed Church; a National Church, or a Dissenting Church; a gorgeous, artistic Church, or a rude, tasteless Church; a Church with its symbolic forms and its expressive ritual, enlisting the senses as well as the soul, or a Church



having neither symbol nor significance, disdaining and offending the senses ;—but *these are your facts.*

And as all Christians believe these facts, though they do not believe them in precisely the same way, it would be a notable sign of the fundamental unity of the Church, if every congregation of Christians throughout the world would, as often as they meet together, stand up, and declare aloud, before God, before angels, before all men, and before devils, their personal faith in this ancient, comprehensive, and glorious Creed.

Such an utterance of the Christian world, with one accord, and from the soul, could not fail to attract the sympathy of Heaven,—of its innumerable angels and the spirits of just men made perfect. And could it fail to abash Hell and its powers of darkness?

I. *I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.* I am not an Atheist. My reason says, "I believe in God," my heart replies, "And I believe in God." Neither am I a Deist, believing indefinitely in a God, all-powerful, wise, and good: I believe in God, *The Father*. I hold with all my soul, and with all my heart, and with all my strength, the sound and comfortable faith, that I have an Almighty Father, and that I, as a child, am individually precious in the sight of my Father.

I am prepared to believe in good news direct from my God, I am prepared to believe in the most marvellous Divine sympathy with my condition; because I believe the Infinite God is *my Father*.

I believe that God the Father Almighty is *the Maker of heaven and earth*. I do not believe that they came where they are by chance, I do not believe that they made themselves. I believe that they were made by

our Father who is in Heaven, and that He made them for His children. The universe has a Father, Heaven has a Father, and the earth, full as it is of sin, disorder, and sorrow, has a Father. I can lie down and sleep in peace, I can hail the morning and rise joyfully, under an Almighty Father; I receive all pleasure with the greater pleasure, and discipline with entire approbation, since both alike are from my Father; I can sicken and die in peace, for nothing is too hard for God,—He is Almighty, and nothing which He can do is too loving, because He is a Father.

II. "*And in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord.*" I believe in one God, and I believe in the unity of God, and yet I am not a Unitarian. I believe that the threefold distinction of God is as essential to God as His unity, and that it is as clearly revealed. The Apostles' Creed contains the doctrine of the Trinity, but not an explanation of the doctrine. It is essential to the Christian faith to hold it, but it is not essential to the Christian faith that you should hold it after any particular school. If any do not hold it in the way in which I hold it, I have no quarrel with them; let them hold it in their own way, only, *let them hold it.*

I believe in an only Son of God, the First-born of every creature,—the only absolutely Divine outcoming and manifestation of the Eternal Father, by whom He made the worlds, and who is the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His Person. I believe that this only Son of The Father is very God of very God, and the Lord, and Head, of every creature, Through the grace of God, I have neither the rashness nor the presumption to make my appeal to the all-consuming essence of The Father, apart from the person

of His Son. Who am I, that my reason should be too stubborn, and my heart too haughty, to acknowledge His only begotten Son, as "My Lord, and my God"? For, according to both the Old Testament and the New, the unsearchable, unapproachable Father hath said of His First begotten, "Let all the angels of God worship Him."—"Worship Him, all ye gods."

III. "*Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost.*" "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness to him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." The fleshly mind therefore denies that Christ was conceived of the Spirit of God; and affirms that He was not only "made of a woman," but that He was conceived of the will of the flesh, and of the will of man. In short, that He had a human father. But what to the carnal mind is "foolishness," to the spiritual mind is "the wisdom of God." It seems to me to be most vital and essential to the whole scheme of New Testament Theology, to maintain that Christ was conceived "*not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*" I believe that He was conceived of the Holy Ghost, and that, immediately, directly, and exclusively, God was His Father; so that He is strictly and truly God in our nature. I believe that the conception of human nature anew from God, and without the intervention of a creaturely father, is the secret corner-stone of Christianity. I believe that the denial of Christ's conception of the Holy Ghost takes away all ground for the regeneration of our nature, in any proper sense of the word. Inasmuch as every human being, according to the course of nature, is conceived in sin, and born a fallen and

depraved creature, if the only Son of God was not conceived of the Holy Ghost, there is, unto this day, no Saviour-Head of mankind. Quite consistently, therefore, those who deny the conception of Christ, deny also the doctrines of human depravity and of the new birth. But if, as we believe, the root and ground of our degeneracy were in Adam, it was necessary that the root and ground of our regeneration should be in Christ. As a fallen and corrupt spirit is actually in contact with us, and in us, by derivation from a fallen head; it was requisite, in order to our redemption, that the Unfallen and incorruptible Spirit should be actually in contact with us, and in us, by derivation from our new Head.

IV. He was "*born of the Virgin Mary.*" I believe in the Incarnation, that is, I believe that Divinity assumed our humanity. "A body hast Thou prepared Me." I believe the doctrine of the Incarnation to be as essential to true philosophy as to true theology. The descent of man from God, the connection of man with God, and the ascent of man to God, are unintelligible apart from the Incarnation. The coming of Christ in the flesh certifies me that man, though fallen, is the offspring of God, that God still owns His connection with him, and that he is capable of being transformed to the image of God.

Again, if Christ be not merely nominally, but actually, our Saviour, it is necessary that both the qualifications of Deity and humanity should meet in Him; for, apart from His Divine Nature, He could not save us, and apart from His human nature, He would not be sufficiently related to us. But if He be strictly Immanuel, our nature is saved, for God is with us.

V. He "*Suffered under Pontius Pilate.*" He, being holy, undefiled, and separate from sinners, could not but keenly suffer in an unholy world, and living in the midst of sinners. Indeed, He took our nature that He might suffer in it, and for it. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, but He suffered more than Pontius Pilate inflicted, or could inflict. His outward sufferings only represent to us in dim shadow His deeper sufferings. He came to be made a "curse for us," that by entering into our curse, and our curse entering into Him, He might suffer it, and by suffering it, exhaust it. "He was made sin for us," and suffered all the more from sin, and for sin, that "He knew no sin." The Holiness of His Divine Nature made Him a sufferer beyond anything that can be revealed or understood.

VI. He "*Was Crucified.*" It was crucifixion to Him to be made flesh. And every day, as long as He tarried with us, His soul was crucified. Never was there sorrow like unto His sorrow. To be compassed about with the limits, the bondage, and the darkness of our flesh, was the most bitter, abject, hourly, Cross to Him. There was nothing in His condition or circumstances, from His birth to His death, accordant with His Divine Nature. The restless, striving, corrupt condition of this lower creation; the law of death in universal operation throughout nature and creature; the state of mankind; the prison of His own body; the power which Hell had over Him, through our nature, to beset Him with temptations and horrible darkness; His yet more dreadful consciousness of separation from God, by His coming into our place and desert;—these were a crucifixion to His spirit which neither words nor imagination can represent. His final and literal

crucifixion was only a conclusion which corresponded with the course of His life. His soul underwent a far keener crucifixion in the garden than He suffered from the Rōman soldiers on Calvary. The blood-shedding in Gethsemane cost Him more agony than the blood-shedding on the Cross.

VII. "*Dead*," I believe that He was dead; and that not simply as a matter of course, but as a matter of necessity, as man's Redeemer. It became Him to be a dead man, that He might join Himself to all dead men, and that He might conquer death in the dead man. Utterly dead, hopelessly dead, as we should say. He was taken down from the Cross. For the Redeemer of dead men must demonstrate His qualification by becoming Himself a *dead man*.

VIII. And being a dead man, He was "*buried*," as all dead men are. A bleeding, bruised, and mangled corpse, He was laid in the grave. Adam and myriads of his children have gone to the grave, myriads are going now, and myriads yet to come will go to the grave: thither also would the Deliverer of Adam's race go. He would suffer man's penalty in full. He will not only comfort every fallen and guilty creature with a sure *promise*, but with something still more comforting and substantial. By coming into Time, wearing man's nature, and going back again to His own Eternity, through death and the grave, taking man's nature, that "*was dead and buried*," with Him; He will give to every heir of the grave, proof tangible and conclusive, that, in spite of death and burial, He can bring him, whole and alive, to the joyful house of eternity.

IX. I believe that Jesus Christ went lower than the grave,—“*He descended into Hell.*” The bodies of mankind were in the grave, and therefore He will be laid in the grave: the spirits of mankind were in Hell, and He will, as a dead man, in Spirit, descend into Hell. He is “The First”: He will be “The Last” also. “The strong man” that had the power of death, that is, the devil, He will bind *in his own house*, and spoil his goods. He will prevail over all the power of the Enemy, not only on earth, but in the world of spirits. He will visit the captives in their prison, those who saw His day and were glad, all those who “died in faith,” not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off;—He will bring them out of the house of bondage, and give them the fulness of the things which they hoped for. He will “lead captivity captive.” He will not return singly and alone, but as a king returning from the battle, He will bring His spoils along with Him. It had been asked long ago, “Shall the prey be delivered from the mighty, or shall the lawful captive (the captivity of the just) be delivered?” And the answer had been given: “Thus saith the Lord, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered” (Isa. xlix. 24, 25).

X. Having laid the rock of human salvation thus deep, deep as the powers and subtleties of Hell, “*The third day He rose again.*” In spirit, He came forth from the invisible world, and in body, from the grave. He was dead, but *He* could not be held by death; He was buried, but the grave had no power to retain *Him*; He descended into Hell, but Hell fainted at *His* presence. Anticipating the burial of His dead body,

and the descent of His spirit into Hades, He had spoken, long before His Incarnation, with infinite assurance, saying, by the mouth of David: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hell, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt show Me the path of Life." On the third day from His death, therefore, "He showed Himself alive" to His disciples. He was "the Wonderful" man before; He is more Wonderful now. He is the same Jesus, and yet He is changed. He is in the same body, and yet it is not the same body. It is the same body become unadulterous, and incorruptible. He still has our flesh and our bones, but refined, spiritualised, glorified, and made Eternal. His body *was* like the dull matter of the earth, as it is now; His body *became* a prophecy and type of the earth, as it shall be, when it is purged by the fire of the Divine glory. His body *was* part and parcel of the temporal universe: His body *became* the Head and Crown of the eternal universe.

XI. Having no more an Earthly body, but a Divine body, "*He ascended into Heaven.*" During forty days He conversed with His disciples, and gave them "many infallible proofs" of His resurrection, and then, "while they beheld, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight." Heaven was from the beginning the destiny of man; but the Adversary drew him into his snare;—converting his body into dead matter, he added it to the dead matter of the world, his spirit he held in captivity in Hades. But, O joy unutterable, man is delivered from the snare of the fowler, man is gone forth from Hades, and from the grave, and is gone into Heaven!



XII. Man is not only ascended into Heaven: "*He sitteth on the right hand of The Father Almighty.*" That Heaven is opened to man is a blessed truth, but it is much less than the truth; man is exalted high over all the angels, authorities, and powers, of the Heavenly world. In a far higher sense than any other creature, man is become the son of God. He is alone in his exaltation. "To which of the angels said He at any time, *Sit on My right hand?*" No angel ever humbled himself as the man Christ Jesus hath done! Which of the angels ever made himself of no reputation? Which of them ever assumed flesh, to be mocked, spit upon, beaten, torn with thorns, and shamefully killed? Which of the angels ever took the place of the guilty and the lost? There is ground, therefore, for the exaltation of the man Christ Jesus, far above all creatures and all Heavens. In voluntary self-humiliation He took the lowest place, and is therefore raised to the highest place. "He humbled Himself" as no creature ever did, or can do:—"wherefore God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in Heaven, and those in earth, and those under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the glory of God the Father." Mark this,—that every knee of celestial intelligences, and of terrestrial, and of souls departed, should bow to Jesus, and that every tongue should confess that He is Lord; and not, as some say, to the dishonour of God the Father, but "*to the glory of God the Father.*"

XIII. "*From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.*" At the set, the appointed time, His

self-abasement was openly displayed; and at the set, the appointed time, His Divine glory will be made manifest. And whenever He comes, every creature will stand judged in His presence. For the likeness, or unlikeness, of every creature to Him is the law of nearness, or distance. And nearness to Him will be reward, and distance from Him will be penalty. It is kind and loving, it is right and fitting, that the tenderest, meekest, humblest, highest, greatest Being should judge all other beings.

What will be the precise character and circumstances of Christ's coming, are not given to me to say; and if it were, this is not the place. The Apostles' Creed allows of every latitude. So far as this Creed goes, pre-millennialists are welcome to their views, and post-millennialists are as welcome to theirs. Those who look for Christ's personal reign upon earth are at liberty to do so; and those who favour a spiritual reign, until His final revelation at the dissolution of the material universal, have an equal liberty. All that the Creed fixes is, that, *He will come*, and that, *He will judge the living and the dead*. Christ has tasted death for every man, and a meeting is decreed between Him and every man, for judgment. And who can call it a hard law, that he should be judged by One who loved him unto death, even the death of the Cross?

XIV. "*I believe in the Holy Ghost.*" I fancy I can see in the order observed in this Creed an evidence of more than human thought and wisdom. Most persons who believed in the Trinity would have mentioned the Holy Ghost at the beginning, that is, immediately following the mention of The Father and the Son. Whereas here, all allusion to the Holy

Ghost is postponed until the confession of Christ and of His whole work is completed. Now this very order of things teaches a great truth. It would be wrong to say that there was no Spirit of God, or Holy Spirit, prior to the Incarnation; and yet it is a truth that the Holy Ghost, in the New Testament sense, was not given before the glorification of Christ. "The Holy Ghost was not yet; because that Jesus was not yet glorified." That is to say, the Spirit of God is wonderfully and graciously modified, as well as more abundantly vouchsafed, by the mediation of the glorified humanity of our Lord. It savours then of Divine Wisdom that the confession of the Holy Ghost occurs, in the Creed, where it does.

I believe, moreover, that as there was an age when God the Father Almighty, as Maker of Heaven and Earth, was especially revealed, and that following that our own age came, in which Jesus Christ His only Son (who was hidden in the Bosom of the Father during the first age), has been manifested: so there will be yet an age, which shall be more emphatically the age of the Spirit.

XV. "I believe in the Holy Ghost; *the Holy Catholic Church.*" There is also a Divine reason for the mention of the Holy Catholic Church in this place, and not sooner. For, strictly speaking, there was no such thing as a Holy Church, and still less a Catholic Church, before the outpouring of the Holy Ghost. A Catholic religion is a religion that has respect to man as man, and not to any nation, class, or condition of men. And the Catholic Church is the universal Church, which includes in one body all regenerate souls. The Holy Ghost is the Holy Catholic Spirit proceeding

from The Father, through His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, dwelling in all true believers, and binding them together in one body. This one body is the Holy Catholic Church, the Body of Christ, and the temple of the Holy Ghost.

And as I believe in a yet future, and more abundant descent of the Holy Ghost into prepared souls, so I believe that there will be a Church, not which shall arrogantly *call itself Catholic*, but which shall *be Catholic*, in the Holy Ghost.

XVI. "*The Communion of Saints.*" One Holy Spirit in all holy souls, is the ground of the Communion of all holy souls. There is unity in the Spirit, for the Spirit is one: in human opinions there cannot be unity, for in them there is vexatious diversity. The great reason why more is not known and experienced of the Catholic Communion of Saints is, that the hearts and minds of Christians are much more in the opinions and peculiarities of their own parties than in the Holy Ghost. The Heavenly Communion of Saints can only be in that which is common to all Saints; and in proportion as all surrender themselves to the Headship of Christ, and subject their peculiarities to the unity of the Spirit, in that measure they will attain to that joy within joy, "joy in the Holy Ghost," in the Communion of Saints.

The Communion of Saints is Heaven tasted on earth. It is nothing less than the influx of the Divine Blood and Life of the Heart of Jesus Christ into the Members of His Body, and its common circulation through them to Him again, and from Him to them. The Communion of Saints is the Holy Spirit witnessing in all the Saints that they are one in Christ, and with each other.

St. Paul, speaking concerning Christ and the Church, saith : "We are members of His Body, of His flesh, and of His bones." Also : "We are members one of another." The Communion of Saints, therefore, is the Communion that prevails under one Head, and throughout the members of one body. It is the descent of Holy Love from the Bosom of the Eternal Father, through His Son, by the Holy Spirit, into the souls of all the children of God ; and the mutual flow of their affections by One Spirit, through the Son, to their common Father.

XVII. "*The Forgiveness of Sins.*" This also is the right place to speak of the Forgiveness of Sins. For if the Holy Ghost were present in greater measure and power in the Church, then would the Church be Holy and Catholic, then would there be closer Communion among the Saints, and then, also, there would be a powerful witness in the Church of the Forgiveness of Sins. The Apostle John speaks of the cleansing operation of the blood of Christ as a blessed consequence of the Communion of Saints. "*If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin.*"

And not only so, but from God the Father Almighty, and from Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord, and from the Holy Ghost, and from the Holy Catholic Church, as the Lord's Body on the earth, and from these in unity, there would go forth upon the world a mighty spirit of grace and a fulness of pardoning mercy. If the Church were one in the Holy Ghost, the Church would not assume, but would *have*, Divine authority ; and the full force of our Lord's words would apply to her : "I

will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven : and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven ; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in Heaven."

XVIII. "*The Resurrection of the body.*" The Resurrection of the body is the consummation of ~~the~~ salvation by Christ. It will be the grand evidence that our God in Christ, by the power of the Holy Ghost, has prevailed over all the power of the Enemy, and put away all sin. The demonstration of the Forgiveness of Sin will not be perfect till the body is raised from the dead, a glorified body. For if my body were finally held in corruption and death, there would seem to be some power too mighty for my Redeemer, withholding from me what was mine ;—the penalty of sin would seem to be still lying on my body ; the evidence of my forgiveness would seem to be incomplete. But when my body, my body that played so great part in my temptation, sin, and shame, my body that was the busy and eager servant of my depraved spirit,—when this body of sin and death is restored to me, a glorious, incorruptible body, what a cloudless, triumphant proof it will be to me, that I am utterly forgiven and wholly redeemed.

● XIX. "*And the Life everlasting.*" A sinless spirit in a sinless body, and both crowned with endless life!—such is our hope! "The gift of God," to His fallen and redeemed creatures, "is Eternal Life through Jesus Christ our Lord": Life in Heaven, Life grounded in, and flowing from, the adorable Trinity, and that Life lasting ever, and ever, and ever. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us!" will be the cry of redeemed mankind to all eternity.

Behold, what manner of love! what manner of love!

Strictly speaking, God "only hath Immortality," but He gives His own Immortality to the glorified Body of His Son, and His Body comprehends the glorified body of the whole Church. The body of Christ being complete, the six days' work of Time will be finished, and "Time shall be no longer." Then will follow the seventh, the endless day of God, namely, Eternity, hallowed by the immediate Presence of God, and consecrated to free communion between Himself and His creatures, to joyful communion between His creatures and Himself. *Amen.*

# QUIET HOURS

## THE CHAIN OF THE DIVINE BENEFITS

THE love wherewith God hath loved us is great, and never to be forgotten. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us." He finds us in Adam, guilty and labouring under the burden of innumerable sins: He meets us in Christ with mercies and forgiveness. He finds us in Adam, fearfully diseased: He meets us in Christ with Divine Health, and makes us perfectly whole. He finds us exposed to a great destruction, and meets us with redemption. He finds us poor, destitute alike of dignity and wealth, and crowns us, in Christ, with riches and honour. He finds us, having the great capacities of immortals, but void, craving, and restless: He fills all our capacities to satisfaction with His "good things." He finds us under the corruption of nature, exposed to age and death: He passeth through our souls with His



Holiness, and reneweth in us the Youth of His only-begotten Son.

Well may the redeemed and beloved soul arouse herself, to "bless the Lord;" and all that is within her, to bless His Holy Name. For His Holy Name might have been to her a "consuming fire," but in Jesus, the awful fire has become a pardoning, healing, redeeming, glorifying *grace*.

With "joy unspeakable and full of glory," the elect soul sings within herself: "I will extol Thee, my God, O King; and I will bless Thy Name for ever and ever. Every day will I bless Thee; and I will praise Thy Name for ever and ever. What shall I render unto the Lord for *all His benefits* towards me?"

- I. "*He forgiveth all thine iniquities.*"
- II. "*He healeth all thy diseases.*"
- III. "*He redeemeth thy life from destruction.*"
- IV. "*He crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies.*"
- V. "*He satisfieth thy mouth with good things.*"
- VI. "*He reneweth thy youth like the Eagle's.*"

I. "*He forgiveth all thine iniquities.*" Thine iniquities are more than can be numbered; and they are an intolerable burden, so that thy soul, under them, "can in nowise lift up herself." He forgiveth them *all*. He relieveth thee of *all*. He taketh the dreadful burden from thy back, the galling yoke from thy neck, and makes thee free.

O my soul, think, and wonder : He who forgives thee afflicts His Son, and in His Son afflicts Himself, that He may forgive thee. He bowed Himself to take thy burden. He travailed under "all thine iniquities." *He* was made a curse for thee. He bore thy sins in His own body on the tree. For thy sake, He was numbered with transgressors, and died thy death to deliver thee from death.

Thine iniquities are in-equities. There is nothing just or right in thee. Thy very nature is an in-equity, bringing forth nothing but in-equities. In-equities towards thy God, in-equities towards thy neighbour, and in-equities towards thyself, make up the whole of thy life. Thou art a bad tree, and a bad tree, cannot bring forth good fruit.

"He forgiveth all thine iniquities." He forgiveth thee thine evil nature, and He forgiveth thee all its evil fruit. And His forgiveness, like every word of His Power, fulfils itself in works. His word comes not in word only, but in demonstration and power. He finds the soul all in-equity, and laden with in-equities : He gives to it His own Holiness, and evermore it brings forth the fruits of Holiness, to the glory and praise of God ; and thus His righteousness within us becomes also a righteousness upon us. Therefore the soul is rooted and grounded both in humility and love to God : in humility, because in herself she is all iniquity, covered and oppressed with iniquities ; and in love to God, because He hath made Himself her

Righteousness, and put upon her His own Beauty for a covering. "This is the name wherewith He shall be called, THE LORD our RIGHTEOUSNESS."

II. "*He healeth all thy diseases.*" Corruption and disease have a spiritual origin. Indeed, what is there that exists, or that can exist, which has not a spiritual origin? The universe is spiritual in its origin, for "God is a Spirit." And all material corruption was preceded by spiritual corruption. Evil spirits are older than any form of material evil. Had there been no "spiritual wickedness in high places," there could have been no corruption in the material creation. All diseases were, and are, spiritual, to begin with. Whatever exists in spirit, operates into matter. The qualities, both of Heaven and Hell, are in operation, in and through all matter. All that is material is the seat, or ultimatum, of all that is spiritual.

Disease is a state of in-equity in the body, but it is only the in-equity that pre-existed in spirit, fulfilling itself in matter. The *Divine* art of healing therefore lies in the forgiveness of the soul's in-equities. Remove the in-equities of the soul, and universal healing comes in. Christ healeth *all thy diseases*, by forgiving *all thy iniquities*. Sin is soul-disease, and the parent of all disease; when Christ enters the soul, the axe is laid at the root of the tree,—sin is slain, and disease is doomed, and soul and body have the certain prospect of being

right, or whole, that is, perfectly well. When the soul has found its cure, the body also has found its cure; and the death of the body is only a step in the process of cure.

Wherefore, the second link of the chain inevitably follows from the first: "He forgiveth all thine iniquities—He healeth all thy diseases."

III. "*He redeemeth thy life from destruction.*" As righteousness, peace, and eternal life are an indissoluble unity, so are iniquity, misery, and destruction. "I was shapen in iniquity." In-equity of being becomes in-equity in operation; in-equity in operation generates disorder; disorder in a living subject is disease, and disease ripens into death. "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

Therefore, He who forgiveth our iniquities, *redeems our life from destruction*. The removal of *all* in-equity from our spiritual nature, is not only the removal of all disease, but of *the ground* of disease, and the removal of all disease, and of the ground of disease, is redemption from death. Our present body is the body of a fallen spirit, the body of a fallen spirit is diseased in the fountain-head of its life: death is the consummation of disease, and the grave is the monument of the body's destruction.

Every fallen spirit is a sinning spirit, every sinning spirit is a perishing spirit, and Hell is the great monument of the soul's destruction. Who shall destroy the great destroyers, Death and Hell,

and deliver those who, through fear of them, are all their life-time subject to bondage? "The Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world," shall destroy Death and Hell. He hath sworn, and will not repent: "I will ransom them from the power of the Grave; I will redeem them from Death: O Death, I will be thy plagues! O Grave, I will be thy destruction." When He taketh away the sin of the soul, no evil has any longer the mastery over that soul. Death has no sting, the Grave no victory, Devils no power, Hell no claim.

IV. "*He crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies.*" Great and precious is the Redemption which is in Christ Jesus; but the Lord our God is more than a Redeemer. Forgiving, Healing, and Redeeming, are only the beginning of His work. Simply to deliver us from all evil will not satisfy Him. He will not pardon His criminals, and dismiss them. He pardons them, and receives them into His House, He makes them all children, and all His children are His heirs, and all His heirs are princes, and all His princes are *crowned*. It is not in the Heart of God, though they have been sinners, to give His pardoned a cold reception. They are more than welcome, they are dearly beloved and longed-for. To supply their *wants* is a very little thing with God. He will enrich them, crown them, and compass them about, with more gifts and honours than they can receive.

Nor is the munificence which awaits His redeemed simply an exposition of His boundless wealth. For a Great King might bestow honours with a distant heart. The princely honours with which God crowns the forgiven are pledges of His Friendship. They are "Loving-kindness and tender mercies." He heaps upon redeemed sinners untold riches from His full Heart ; and shows to them the softest ways of His Love. Mercies are the softnesses of Eternal Love, but "*tender mercies*" are unutterable endearments from the Heart of hearts. The honours, glories, and delights which await the redeemed, on their return home, are not only the ways of the King of kings, but of the Father of fathers.

V. "*He satisfieth thy mouth with good things.*" The joy of God at the recovery of His lost is the joy of all His joys. It is as though sin had not only wounded and broken the creature's heart, but had pierced and broken the Lord's Heart also. Hence the final meeting of the two long-divided, broken hearts, the redeemed and the Redeemer, creates a Heaven in Heaven. God longs to exhaust His heart upon His dead, who are alive again, upon His lost, who are found. And before all the elder Heavens, He justifies the excess of His joy and the magnificence of His gifts : "It is meet that we should make merry and be glad."

What shall not be done unto the people whom the King of kings delighteth to honour ? Rather,

what shall be given to the children whom the Almighty Father loves, as He loves His Only-Begotten? "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy House; and Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy Pleasures." But who can speak of "the goodness of Thy House"—the House of Infinite Love? What wise man will not rather restrain the poverty of his conceptions, than venture them upon any solution of "the river of *Thy Pleasures*?" Let us content ourselves with exclaiming: "Oh the blessednesses of the people whom Thou choosest, and causest to approach unto Thee, that they may dwell in Thy courts:" they shall be crowned with "an exceeding and eternal weight of glory;" they shall be "abundantly satisfied" with good. They shall have distinction and honour enough, and all their honours shall be associated with a fulness of joy. All the capacities of their immortal nature shall be *filled*, and the fulness shall be a fulness of *good*. "Oh how great is Thy goodness which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee!" "For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside Thee, what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him." They are no vain words of the Holy Ghost when He crieth out, by the mouth of David: "O the blessedness of the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." All his in-equities

are removed ; all his diseases are healed ; his life is redeemed from destruction : he is to be crowned with loving-kindness and tender mercies, and abundantly satisfied with the good things both of the House and of the Heart of God

VI. And O wondrous Crown of crowns !—*His Youth will be renewed like the Eagle's.*—Not once renewed, to sink again into the frailty and insipidity of age, but ever and ever and evermore renewed by the ceaseless communication of young life from the Source of Life. “A pure river of water of Life, clear as crystal, proceedeth out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb.” This river is *Life*, and to all Eternity it rises and issues, fresh, and ever fresh, from its own inexhaustible fountain in the Divine Nature. “With Thee is the Fountain of Life.” And as the Divine Life is never feeble and never old, and as all the children of Heaven will receive this Life without intermission for ever, they cannot but be young for ever. By their union with Christ, as members of His Body, and by the unremitting supply of Life from Him, they will flourish in immortal youth. Indeed, as they become more and more Christ-like, and as their capacities enlarge, so will they receive Divine Life more freely, and reflect it more beautifully. Their Eternal Life will be nothing less than an everlasting progression towards the perfection of youth.

Such is the chain of the Divine Purposes towards



## 10 THE CHAIN OF DIVINE BENEFITS

man, and of the Divine Promises given to man, all of which are “Yea, and Amen, in Christ Jesus, to the glory of God the Father.” Behold, they are all written in the Word of the Lord, and from Eternity *were written in the Heart of God*; and not one of them shall fail of being accomplished. God’s plan, therefore, ripens into—

VII. *The Endless Holiday of redeemed man.* These six links in the chain of His Eternal purpose in Christ, are, as it were, His six days’ work upon the Human race, reaching unto the true seventh day, or the Sabbath of God’s Eternal, joyful rest in man, and of man’s eternal, joyful rest in God. “There remaineth [such] a rest to the people of God.”

HALLELUJAH!

## AIDS TO THOUGHT

*"It repented JEHOVAH that He had made man."*

*"It grieved Him at His Heart."* Such a creature as man had become was no credit to Him ;—the very contrary,—a reproach. Generation had not only become degeneration, but degeneration frightfully degenerating, and piteously crying for Regeneration.

What were the tendencies, or latent qualities, of that "*Dust*" out of which man was formed, that the spirit which the Lord God breathed into it so soon lost its integrity? Had *dust* always the Old Serpent's qualities slumbering in it? and was it therefore the Serpent's food? and, being his food that the man was clothed with, was he able to introduce his hunger into the same?

Does it not seem likely that the seeds of ancient and dire evils lay in that void and formless mass of which darkness was the appropriate swaddling-band? How came it void and formless? How came it chaos? It was infinitely worthy of the Divine Power and Wisdom, to subject chaos to law and order, and to convert it into the order of the

material universe ; which is yet not precisely the order of the Kingdom of Heaven. For *such materials* were perhaps not capable of being immediately converted into a Heavenly Kingdom. To restore the material universe to its original Heavenly condition (from which the chaotic condition was the lowest and farthest remove), is precisely "*the end*," to effect which the Eternal Word clothed Himself with matter.

We ask again, What was that coverlet of universal darkness the sign of?—that pure, or adulterous material, was lying beneath? If the material were corrupt, although the organisation of the same into an orderly creation might be "very good," and its subordination to law "very good," and the spirit that was diffused through it "very good," the latent corruption might in the very first hour of temptation develop itself. The extinct tendencies in the old chaos might, by the application of Lucifer's match, be kindled again, and once kindled, they might become mighty enough to prevail over the first organisation, and thus, what was "very good" might become worse than bad,—very bad. If so, it is well said, that before the foundation of such a world, a new beginning was in the Creator's Heart and purpose.

To deliver the flesh out of its dilemma, it was necessary that the Word should become flesh. Eternal Day put on night, in order first to bring His Day into the night, and finally to bring back

the whole realm of night to Holy Day, in which "there shall be no more night." The Son of The Infinite and The Eternal (bearing in His own Bosom Infinity and Eternity), has put on the universe of space and time, in order to dissolve its bonds, and to make it one again with the House of God, that is Eternal in the Heavens.

If any one ask how the materials, out of which the present temporal universe was formed, became corrupt? I reply, that it is written: "The devil was a murderer from the beginning." "He abode not in the truth." "The angels sinned." "The angels kept not their first estate." These brief disclosures of an angel-fall are enough to account for the ages upon ages of disorder, wild conflict, and ruin, through which the material universe passed, prior to its present form, and the creation of man.

By the decree of Pharaoh, Moses is dead as soon as he is born: by the decree of God, Moses is brought up in Pharaoh's house. In spite of his own decree, Pharaoh nurses, feeds, educates Moses; and Moses, on behalf of God, uses against Pharaoh all that he derives from Pharaoh. God is wiser than Pharaoh. The Devil is old, but God is older. The Devil is God's lowest drudge, and servant of servants, who knows not the wonderful fabric which will result from his cross-working. For if Satan crossed

the work of God, with his malicious subtlety and darkness, much more has God crossed the work of Satan, by bringing into the world, and into our flesh, the Infinite Love, Light, and Holiness of His only Son. Had it not been for the dark and miserable counter-working of the Evil Spirit, the manifold wonders, that from Eternity were hidden in the Infinite One, might never have been brought out to view.

What God takes from us, it is always gain to lose. He gives back to us our friends more deeply, more tenderly, more sacredly, after they have been taken from us by Death. When they become wholly *His*, they become more intimately *ours*. The intimacy before death pertains more to the flesh and its senses: after death, it pertains more to the spirit and its inmost affections. It is as though God gave them to us, out of His own Bosom, with the Holiness and fragrance of the Divine Nature added to them. By Death they become too chaste, too Heavenly, for our light moods and our common hours: they visit us only in our holiest moments. They act upon us, therefore, as motives to prayer, watchfulness, and retirement of spirit. They greatly befriend our best interests. As the Lord before His Death was "*with*" His friends, but afterwards "*in*" them, so our holiest friends help

us the more, when they put off flesh, and are no more seen.

Have you not heard the mere novice in science and philosophy bring against the Christian pulpit the wholesale charge of poverty and dulness; fancying himself the while double proof against all contradiction? Why, if it were not for the perversity of the human heart, and the consequent earthy dulness and opacity of the understanding, every man would feel and acknowledge that all the philosophical schools, and Royal scientific institutions of Europe, conversed about old rags and bones, straws and nonentities, compared with the subjects which are presented from the humblest pulpit. As surely as the philosophy and theology of all nations once culminated in a Platonic Literature, and as, in not a few instances, the highest Platonic Culture added to itself, under the sovereignty of Christ's Spirit, the Christian Culture, so truly there are teachers among us, who have assigned places in the Temple of Christian Truth to all the findings and results both of the ancient and modern world. We have Alexandrian disciples who have emptied into their souls the contents of Egypt, India, Assyria, Persia, Greece, and Rome, and who, by the all-subjugating, all-humanising, and all-harmonising Spirit of Christianity, present again to the world the utmost "wisdom of the

world," heightened, sublimed, and become far more human by the inspiration of the Lord Jesus Christ. Philosophy did construct a ladder by which it reached the heavens, but they were either vulgar Babylonish heavens, or otherwise empty heavens, peopled by the abstractions of abstractions, presided over by a God who was the quintessential abstraction of all abstractions; but from neither of these heavens did there descend any loving helpful influences, to help the low and the lowest. But in the name of Jesus, the human soul has not only touched the Heavens, but has entered the Heavens of Heavens, and thence has not scorned the earth, but descended with her bosom full of Love, her mind full of Wisdom, and her hands and feet full of working energy, for the most ignorant and the most depraved.

## “SERMONS IN STONES”

Ps. cxiv. 8. Deut. xxxii. 13

It is an easy matter to say, there are “Sermons in Stones;” but to preach forth the sermons is another thing. Stones are stones, and flints are stubborn stones; they hold fast their secret. To one in a thousand they do not breathe a whisper of it: to none will they utter it fully. Stones contain more than sermons: the Psalms of God are in them. But who can rouse the sweet singers from their sleep? who can give sound to their mute music? Concentrated harmonies, highest harmonies, lie in flint, but they are silent as death; and who can awake them from their trance? Spirits, like lightning, dwell in flints, but I,—a poor spirit embedded in the earth of my mortality,—I cannot find my way to their seraphic souls:—I cannot preach forth their sermon: I cannot disenchant them of their song. Yet I know that soul, and sermon, and song, are there.

II. Since my Lord has been pleased to reveal



Himself as "the Stone of Israel," "the Stone which the builders rejected," "the Corner Stone," "the tried Stone," "the Living Stone;"—and since "precious stones" are mentioned among the things which shall pass unhurt through the last fiery test;—and since "a white stone," as significative of the whole gift of God, is promised "to him that overcometh,"—there must be more in stones than figure, density, weight, and colour,—they must be treasure-houses of hidden virtues. The stone-principle must be in the Lord JEHOVAH, for it is written: "In the Lord JEHOVAH is the Rock of Ages." Literal stones are but the world-development of the Rock-principle in the Godhead. God hides Himself in nature, the kingdom of Eternity hides itself in Time, secret powers and playful splendours are locked up in stones.

III. Even by the dim nether-light of Geology, a wondrous amount of ancient lore, written in stones, has been deciphered. Perhaps the Law, presented by Jehovah to Moses, engraven *in stone*,<sup>1</sup> was a hint that Divine writings might be looked for in stones. One thing is certain, that histories upon histories of prior creations, and of mighty, world-wide catastrophes, *are* written in stone. Could we read the writing, stones are books written within and without, containing revelations, of the birth of being from God, and of its falling

away, by which, from being Divine, it became undivine. For example, that which was light became dark; and that which was gaseous and ethereal became solid; and that which was soft, and very susceptible of Holy Influence, became hard and insusceptible; and that which was good became evil; and that which was living became dead; and that which was the house of the Creator became the seat of Satan. All these things are “written and engraven in stones;” but men are wanted, who, being endowed with the upper as well as the nether Wisdom, shall read the writings which are in Time, not from the light of Time, but from the light of Eternity. The mysteries of God can only be read in the light of God. The eye of man seeth *appearances* only, but the eye of God in man seeth things *as they are*, through all disguises. Science, divorced from God, and using her own light, walks in “the mist of darkness for ever,” which her light can only reveal, and never dispel; but this candle-light-illumination of the mist of darkness, she proudly affirms to be all that can be known of the successive formations, destructions, and metamorphoses of Nature. “If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!” And both the light of nature and that of reason ~~are~~ darkness, compared with the light of God. For if nature is but a gorgeous overshadowing of the Eternal Light, and if reason, instead of being an organ of Divine Light, walks

only in the light of nature, then she walks not in light, but in densest shadows.

IV. Not only do stones carry in their bosoms consolidated histories of high and wonderful things; but prophecies also of “a good time coming,” when they will be stones no longer. If one were found worthy to be entrusted with their history, from him they would not withhold their prophecy. Indeed, the history might be found to be prophecy. For the ladder of descent, by which the primitive elements became flint, may be also the ladder of ascent, by which the elements shall regain their aerial liberty.

V. Who can handle flint, and feel that its mystery is solved, by calling it *flint*? Who can handle flint without inquiring what it represents? And who can help asking, how it came to be so different in substance and appearance from what it represents? Who can help thinking of the earth, the air, the fire, the water, which are in the flint? And if he think so far, will he be able to stop there? Having wondered how earth, air, fire, water, happened to become flint, or by what process they were made flint; will he not inquire also how these four, instead of standing in their golden unity, fell into fourfold division and strife? He may think again with as much wonder of any one property in the flint, as of the flint. Earth, for

example, is itself a silent testimony of wholesale ruin and death. To make earth or soil, myriads of myriads of creatures, once alive, contributed their flesh, and blood, and bones. As for the higher elements which are imprisoned in flint, and which were once so free and large;—how became they so terribly confederate as to settle down into flint? One would like to ask the flint also, whether it will not some day open out its wings again, and mount into the ether? and when? When will the subtle elements, which are so sternly compacted, be loosed?

VI. What is more stubborn than stone? what is more yielding than water? what is harder than flint? what is softer than oil? “Tremble, thou Earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob, *who turned the rock into a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters.*”—Who bringeth “*Oil out of the flinty rock.*” A spring of pure water is hermetically sealed up in the flint-stone; a fountain of soft oil is there also. Yea, it is a house of light, a hiding-place of burning splendours.

Come now, let us knock at the door of this house of flint: it may be some answer will be given, or even the door may be opened, and some captive, shut up in darkness for ages of ages, may come forth. But we must bring hardness to hardness, we must make an iron appeal. Smite! Smite again, and with

smart authority, as though you *would* be heard! Again!—There!—the captive comes forth! a spark of everlasting daylight, long imprisoned, is liberated, telling you as plainly as flint can tell, that its terrible hardness is but a vehement condensation of celestial oil, and that its compact darknesses were once as free as sunlight, and are quite capable of becoming as free as ever, as brilliant as ever.

VII. Is it not instructive to us, that things so high have become so low;—that firmamental elements offer themselves, in the shape of stones, for the humblest uses? How beautifully passive they are, to all operators and operations! They are as meekly submissive to lowest uses, as to highest. They are door-steps; they are Apollos. They are sinks; they are monuments. They are broken into fragments and laid down for a highway, without uttering a word of complaint that their royal capacities should be subjected to meanest purposes; they mount into towers, and become lodging-places for Church-bells; they mount higher still, and end in a finger point, not tending earthwards, but Heavenwards, divinely expostulating with all passers-by, on this wise: If stones quit their dark quarry, leave the ground, and mount into the sky, looking serenely down upon the busy streets and all houses of trade and commerce, what a reproach to souls, if *they* do not look upwards, and stretch forth their hands after a holier world. Think of the anomaly!—in every

city, town, and village, and in the presence of each other, there are stones, looking up to Heaven, and men, with all the eyes and all the affections, of body and soul, rivetted on the world.

VIII. Hear another sermon: (Stones the preachers, souls the hearers!) We are stones and you are souls. Our day of freedom is coming. “The day of God” will unlock our dungeon, and proclaim our liberty. Take heed, O souls! lest, in the day of God, when stones shall awake to light, you should enter the house of darkness and bondage. Souls are first, and stones are last: what if the first should become last, and the last first?

IX. Stones are charged with the worst species of hardness,—“as stubborn as a stone,” it is said;—and yet hardest stones submit to be smoothed and rounded, under the soft friction of water. Ask the innumerable myriads of stones on the sea-shore what has become of all their angles, once so stern and sharp, and of the roughness and uncouthness of their whole appearance. Their single reply is, Water wrought with us, nothing but water, and none of us resisted! Hear, then, the sermon of the pebbles: You are souls, and we are pebbles; water is water, and God is God: if we yield to be fashioned by water, and you do not yield to be fashioned by God, be not surprised that the very stones should cry out against you.

X. Stones are stubborn things, but stubborn souls are the stubbornest stones. Stones are less capable of resisting the influences of nature, than souls, the influences of God. Stones, that could resist both the elements of nature and the tools of the workman, would be perverse stones indeed; but what sort of stones are they who feel, and yet resist, "the powers of the world to come"? There are no stones so stony as stubborn souls. God would break them into penitence, but they resist His hammer, they will not be broken. God would chisel them into form and beauty, but they will not part with their deformity. God would unlock their flinty souls, and cause the long-imprisoned fountain of celestial waters to spring and flow; but they resent the appeal of Divine tenderness, by shutting themselves up in yet more flinty stubbornness. The holy oil is in them, and God would search it out, and tempt it to yield, by His soft, insinuating, Holy unction; but the holy oil in them is congealed to flint, and the flint is inveterate. So that they not only do despite to the Spirit of Grace, but abide in ignorance that there is latent within them a nature, whose affections are akin to the holy anointing oil of the Divine Goodness. Alas! alas! when soul turns to flint, how flinty is that flint!

XI. Yet there is hope. For the stubbornest of stubborn souls have been penetrated, and have yielded forth the soft oil of God that was in them.

Blessed is the coalescence, when the Holy flame of Eternal Love pierceth to the holy love-principle in man, and quickeneth it. As flame to flame, such is the meeting and communion between the love of God and love in man. “He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit;” and such an one will acknowledge for ever, to the praise of Jesus Christ, and of God the Father in Him, that “*He brought oil out of the flinty rock.*”

XII. Hear another sermon from stones.—We are stones and you are souls; when all things are dissolved, we shall be dissolved, and you will be revealed; for there is nothing secret in stones that shall not be made manifest, neither anything hidden in souls that shall not be known and come abroad. Take heed that you are not ashamed and confounded before stones, when He cometh, whose Presence shall try both stones and souls, of what sort they are. What virtues there are in stones shall mount up to the throne of God, and be at home there; on the other hand, the ungodlike principles and affections which are in souls will drag them down to the nether darkness.

XIII. Another sermon from stones.—We are stones and you are souls, but we stones are not subject to hardness and bondage, *willingly*;—God hath subjected us to the same in hope. Are your souls *willingly* subject to the bonds of the world, the flesh,



and the devil? or, are you waiting and preparing, as souls should do, for your glorious manifestation, as the sons of God?

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XIV. Hear the stones once more, and from their heart of hearts.—We are stones and you are souls, but your Lord is our Lord, and our Lord is your Lord. He made us, and not we ourselves; and there is not a stone that is not pervaded, through and through, by His Presence. When He died souls mocked Him, but stones trembled to their centre. When He cried, "It is finished! and gave up the ghost," the shock reached the heart of stones; and in that hour, the Lord of nature and of man found sympathy in the sun, in the earth, in the stones, and in the dead. The sun was darkened; the earth did quake; *the rocks rent*; the graves were opened, and many of the dead came out of their graves. O ye human souls, He died for you more than for stones, have you felt His death as stones did? Are your hearts rent, and to their centre opened to His power and glory?

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XV. And once more.—We are stones and you are souls; when the Lord lay enclosed in stone, we offered no resistance to His Resurrection;—have you yielded, that He might rise from the dead in you? His sepulchre was a *rock*, and against the door of His rocky prison a great *stone* was rolled; but rock and stone no sooner felt the first motion

of His Power, than the former gave Him up, and the latter rolled away. O souls! holy men and holy angels have often laboured to roll away the stone from the door of your hearts; and even now the Lord Himself is standing at the door, knocking, and crying: “Take ye away the stone,” that in the Life of your Lord you may rise from the dead, and that the Lord of Life and glory may arise in you.

XVI. Hear a farewell admonition from stones. And when stones preach, souls should hear. We have the substance of stones, but there is no *stony will* in us, to resist Him whom nothing ought to resist. You have the substance of souls, but you carry within you a stony will, by which you resist your Lord, as stones never did. It is better to be stones than such souls. *It is better to be stones than such souls.* O souls! unless you repent and become converted, as it is written, you will “*go down to the stones of the pit, as a carcase trodden under foot.*”

## AIDS TO THOUGHT

NARROW, wretched, and solitary is the self-life: the universal Heart does not beat within it. As the beautiful all-sufficiency does not rise within, it is compelled to seek satisfaction from without. Blessed is the man whose spirit is the temple of Holy Love: he needs neither approbation nor encouragement from without. The all-sufficiency is in him. Give him no countenance, and he will still have countenance enough. If all men disown him, he will feel that he is the more owned. It is essential to him to love, it is not essential to him to be loved. He has immense wealth,—Love is his wealth: he receives it freely, and gives it freely, without missing it. If none pay him back in the same capital, he can wait till they are richer,—when the Divine heart is grown in them they will pay.

The self-life feeds on ashes, for it is the law of every life that it shall taste its own quality. The self-life is self-love, but within the inmost soul of self-love lurks the *fear of evil*. For if a man is the subject of his own individual will, instead of being the subject of the universal law, then all highest

powers and operations are against him ; and though his senses may move in a "fool's paradise," his spirit moves in a "horror of great darkness," foreboding miserable things.

Because the self-life is cold, straitened, and incapable of blessedness, God seeks to vanquish it, in order that His Love may take its place, and that man, being delivered from his selfishness, may sit down to the feast of Eternity.

Have money-worshippers really considered it, that the Living God is not dead metal, and yet that He is, strictly speaking, the only *human gold*? Rich men are the men who carry God in their souls, and these are the only men who have the true human gold to give. The receiver of this gold receives an unmingled blessing; and the giver becomes richer by giving.

As certain of your own poets have said: "*We are His offspring.*" Paul was the man to send to the heathen. The wisdom of God said: "I will send *thee* to the 'Gentiles.'" For *he* was far too broad to condemn wholesale either them or their writings. Truth is truth wherever it is; and *the truth* that is in heathen literature is worthy of a

place in the Divine writings. A higher truth cannot be uttered: "We are His offspring." Because we are the race of God (originally sprung from Him), in all our debasements, He owns us, and seeks after us. It is no longer incredible that He should Himself come to seek and save us, if we are His descendants. If we are God's offspring, it is no wonder that angels are so willingly our servants, and that they will leave Heaven, to pitch and encamp about our tents.

" We would no longer lie  
Like slaves, beneath the throne ;  
My Faith shall *Abba ! Father !* cry,  
And 'Thou *the kindred own.*"

Yes, "*kindred,*" for "we are His *offspring.*" And "no man ever yet hated *His own flesh*, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, as the Lord the Church," which is His Flesh. Surely He sticketh to us closer than a Brother, for we have come forth from His Father.

## NAMES; ESPECIALLY NOAH, AND THE NAME THAT IS ABOVE EVERY NAME

EVERY thing is related to mystery. Names are mysteries, labelled. A thing not labelled is a mystery directly. If it has not been named, we look at it, we smell it, we taste it, we wonder at it, and finally ask, *Who' can it be?* Naming is the annihilation of curiosity. Names are disguises put upon things to conceal from us their mystery. Things without names would be too wonderful for us. Only a few people continue to wonder as much after a thing is named as before.

II. What a thought it is, that ONE NAME should cover all names;—that One Name should signify more than all names! As all things which are named came from One God, there must be a far greater fulness of meaning in His single Name, than in all the names put together of all the creatures and things in Heaven and earth. The earth and all that is in it, the firmament with all the stars, the Heavens with all the angels, are contained in God, but they do not contain God.

Nothing is easier than to say the word *universe*, and yet it would take us millions of millions of years, to bestow one hasty glance upon the surface of that small portion of it which lies within the range of our glasses. But what are all suns, comets, earths, moons, atmospheres, seas, rivers, mountains, valleys, plains, woods, cattle, wild beasts, fish, fowl, grasses, plants, shrubs, trees, minerals, and metals, compared with the meaning of the One Name, GOD? We are learning here under these Heavens, from the Heavens and from the earth, what that Name is, from whom all things, named and unnamed, came. After death,—our emancipated souls, our new eyes, our new friends, and the new scenery, helping us,—we shall commence anew the study of that Name. And to all eternity, all that we shall ever see and hear will only help us to a more humbling, worshipful appreciation of the incomprehensibility of that Name.

III. Whatever comes out of a thing is but a revelation of what was in it. Read thoughtfully the tenth chapter of Genesis, and you cannot fail to wonder at the names which come out of Noah. And all these different names stand for different things, different principles and tendencies;—in short, for diverse natures, answering to the diversity of names. Japheth branches out into his class of names, and Ham into his names, a

totally distinct class, and Shem branches out into his names, another perfectly distinct class. And these names, instead of being merely the names of individuals, include nations of names. Japheth and his descendants more than cover Europe; Ham and his descendants more than cover Africa; Shem and his descendants more than cover Asia. "Shem, Ham, and Japheth, these are the three sons of Noah; *and of them was the whole earth overspread.*" But the single name Noah covers all these, for Shem, Ham, and Japheth, the three princes of all the nations and tribes of the earth, are *his sons*. The whole world of mankind came out of Noah. Simply, then, with respect to the diversity of nature in this man, what number of volumes would it require to tell us what his name stands for? Wonderful man! since whom there has been no such man, for breadth and variety of nature. The name Abraham is great, and represents very much, for the twelve Arabian, as well as the twelve Hebrew, tribes came from him. But Abraham is only one branch from the Shem-line, while Noah stands for Shem and all his branches, and for Ham and all his branches, and for Japheth and all his branches. One antediluvian trunk of the Golden Humanity, with its three branches, weathered the flood, and flourished again on this side of it.\* Grand old trunk, including in itself world-wide virtues and energies. How broad is the distinction between European and Asiatic



humanity, and between both and African humanity ; but all the nations and tribes of Asiatic, European, and African humanity unite in saying, *Our father Noah*. How great this man was, whose breadth included Hercules, Apollo, and Vulcan ; and who was strong enough to hold them all under authority, and in unity, in himself !

IV. And what is worthy of observation, Noah means *rest*, for God found rest in him only, when all flesh had corrupted his way upon earth. “And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, for it repenteth Me that I have made them. The end of all flesh is come before Me.” Is no man found worthy to bridge the abyss of wrath, and to preserve seed upon the earth ? There is *one man*. “The Lord said to Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark ; for *thee have I seen righteous before Me in this generation*.” Not only in Noah’s piety, but in his breadth of nature, God had rest. The greater the variety contained in any unity, the more rest hath God in that unity. It is not every man who would do to be the father of the human race. Jacob is capable of being the father of the Israelites, but he is not capable of being the father of all the Asiatics. How could Persia, India, China, come out of Jacob ? Shem is capable of being the father of all the Asiatic nations ; but *he* is not capable of generating the European character.

Japheth must be, in order that Europe may be. But neither of these men has in him breadth and fulness enough to be the head of mankind. Nor, if you could make both Shem and Japheth into one man, would you then have the required breadth and fulness of nature. The Divine Covenant runs in the line of Shem, but Japheth is not forgotten before God. The Spirit spake by Noah, saying: "God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem." And though a curse was pronounced upon poor Ham, and he was made a servant both to Shem and Japheth, neither the curse nor the bondage is necessarily final, for God is not the God of Shem and Japheth only, but of Ham also; and in the Divine purpose and will, the curse is turned into a blessing, the servitude issues in freedom. When the Lord assumed flesh, His dwelling was indeed in the tents of Shem, but He found faith in "a woman of Canaan," a descendant of Ham, which He found not in the house of Shem; and though a dog with respect to her origin, she found a place in the tents of the Covenant. Shem has breadth, but he has not breadth enough without Japheth; neither can both represent the Divine idea of mankind without Ham. Hagar, Sarah's bondwoman, is a daughter of Ham, but "the Lord God of Shem" "heard her affliction." "And the angel of the Lord said to her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude."

The same God who heard the groaning of Israel in Egypt heard the cries, and saw the tears, of Hagar in the desert. "And the angel of God called to Hagar out of Heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not. Arise, lift up the lad; for I will make him a great nation. And God was with the lad." Every possible variety of man is comprehended in the breadth of the Divine Nature. Adam, the appointed father of mankind, was created by the Trinity, in the image and likeness of the Trinity. God gave to him a manifoldness of nature, representative of His own manifoldness. After him, Noah was chosen to be the father of the new world, who comprehended in himself all the varieties of the Asiatic, all the varieties of the European, and all the varieties of the African race. *He*, of all men then living, found favour in the eyes of the Lord, and in *him*, God, the Trinity (Elohim), found rest.

V. If the name of one, and he a fallen man, covers so much, how shall we speak of the name of the only-begotten Son of God? The name Noah stands for the human race of a single earth, but the name of our Lord Jesus Christ stands for all earths and their creatures, and for all Heavens and their creatures. "By Him were all things created, that are in Heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created

by Him, and for Him." The significance of His Name, therefore, comprehends the significance of "*all things*." His "height" is higher than the Heavens, His "depth" is deeper than Hell, His "breadth" is broader than the universe, His "length" includes a past without beginning, and a future without an end. His fulness answers to all things, and to all things which are in all things. "It pleased the Father that in Him *all fulness* should dwell." But the fulness of the whole creation, visible and invisible, is a very partial expression of His fulness.

VI. What a thrilling, overpowering thought, that it is granted to us fallen men, to be born and natured anew, from the Eternal WORD, the only-begotten Son of God! "Thanks be unto God for His *unspeakable* gift." Instead of standing in the limits imposed upon us, by our descent from Noah and Adam, it is given to us to be created anew in Christ Jesus, in the righteousness and true holiness of the Divine Nature. Who would not rather be Isaac than either Esau or Jacob? Who would not rather be Abraham than either Isaac or Ishmael? And who would not rather be Noah, than Ham, or Japheth, or even Shem? It may be that a man of comparatively simple character, like Shem, finds it much easier to reduce his nature to subjection and order, than a man of Noah's fulness and richness of nature,—a nature including in itself Shem's quietude

and piety, Japheth's breadth and activity, and Ham's sensuousness and joviality. But the final inheritance of a princely nature will be more than a recompense for the extra time and labour required to bring it into harmony and freedom. Therefore, if permitted to choose, I would rather be natured according to Noah than Shem, but I would rather be natured according to my Lord Jesus Christ than Noah, or Adam, or Gabriel. His breadth includes all things, and all possible things. O the Breadth! The Christianisation of human nature not only relates it to every type of man in this earth, but to every variety in all earths, and to every variety of angelic man in Heaven. Man in Christ comprehends more than the fulness of the Cherubic symbol.

VII. Consider, then, the *great sense*, in which the men who constitute "the Body of Christ" are said to be "*the fulness of Him who filleth all in all.*" The Lord Jesus has effected in man's nature the reconciliation of all things—of all things, I say—both which are in the Heavenly and in the earthly universe. And the new men in Him, as being the development of His own Body, are the fulness of this great reconciliation. St. Paul, therefore, is not guilty of hyperbole, in saying to the seed of Christ: "All things are yours; whether the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; *all are yours.*" The ends of the whole creation of God are realised in the last style of mankind.

VIII. In the men of Christ's kingdom, highest things and lowest things meet together. They are both the lowest ground and the highest pillar of Divine Truth. In the Humanity of Christ, Heaven is brought down to the earth, and the earth is sanctified, and become as Heaven. The members of His Body, therefore, are admirably fitted to negotiate between this fallen world and the holy world, between dead sinners and the Fountain of Life. If they were not on earth, neither their words nor their works could serve men ; and if they were not in communication with the Lord in Heaven, there would be nothing in their word or works which could serve men. The men of Christ's Church are steps of ascent and descent, from depraved men to Holy God, and from Holy God to depraved men. They are like Churches, which have their base even lower than the commonest houses, but which from that lower base rise, and tower, above all houses. The fleshly nature (including the carnal *mind*) of Christians is as bad a nature as any creature's nature can be ; but, rising up from within that bad nature, there is a spirit that is in daily communion with the holy world, and the Holy God. And, notwithstanding the badness and ugliness of their first nature, such souls constitute the Church of Christ in the world. It is well for the world that Christians have a fallen, corrupt nature, otherwise they would be too far off from unregenerate men to reach them ; and it is well that they have within their fallen, corrupt

nature, *another nature*, or they would not be in communication with their ascended Lord. If they did not reach to Christ, they would not be able to receive from His hands the bread of life for the world; and if they had not a point of contact with unregenerate men, they would not be able to present to everyone of them "his portion of meat." Indeed, it is well for the lowest and basest natures, that there are in the Church of Christ men of the lowest and basest nature; for like can reach like, and act upon it, in a way that unlikes cannot. It is only the fulfilment of the Incarnation in the uttermost, that Christ is in gross-natured men, hard-natured men, and narrow-natured men; for Christ, in brutish men, and through them, is in communication with all brutish men, who are without God and without hope in the world. So that the man Christ Jesus covers a breadth that reacheth from the height of the Divine holiness on one side, to the farthest extreme of human degradation on the other side.

Oh, what a noble, generous, blessed ~~thing~~ it is to be a Christian! It is a most noble ~~thing~~, for it is life at Court, having access to the ~~King~~ of kings and Lord of lords: it is most generous, for it is a tender devotion to the interests of others. There is no higher life, for it converses with God, and with all mysteries, past, present, and to come: there is no humbler life, for it disdains not to come in contact with the most guilty, wretched, and

abandoned of creatures. A mere handful of Christ-like men are the glory and salvation of the world. They are the body of God in the world, in which He dwelleth among us, as a visible life, and through which He goeth forth as a Divine-human influence to the ends of the earth.



## AIDS TO THOUGHT

IF there were no holy and Christ-like souls in Time, who are constantly resorting to retirement, as it were, to hide themselves with God in Eternity, would not the Holy Influences of Eternity cease to flow into Time? For if *all* men were devoted to temporal pursuits, there would be none sufficiently near, or related, to God and Eternity, to be Channels of Celestial Influence. If mankind only knew upon what their true interests depend, they would thank God that there are always men in solitude, waiting at the gate of the Eternal world, *for their sakes*. While worldly men are thoughtless, far from God, and lost in the giddy whirl of things temporal, their lonely brothers are hidden in secret, and silently waiting upon God, that they may become freighted with Heavenly good for their brethren in the world. It was Christ who, by coming in our nature, first powerfully brought Eternity into Time, and they are Christ's, who by their flesh are in the world, but whose spirits walk in the Divine Presence of their risen Lord.

*"I will fear no evil,* though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death." Bold words! Shall I not fear evil, when evil is so near? Shall I walk through the darkest and most fearful pass of the great giant's territory, and not fear? Shall the giant himself, who has the power of death, be so near as to throw his shadow over me, and yet shall I not fear? *"I will fear no evil."* Are not these presumptuous words? No; *"for Thou art with me!"* The little child, who would be terrified to walk alone through the dark defile, if carried in the arms of its father, *fears no evil.* I am weakness itself, but my Shepherd's "staff" is Almighty; and weakness, supported by Almighty, may well enter the solemn darkness of the awful valley, singing, *"I will fear no evil! Thou art with me!"* My Shepherd will be delighted with my confidence, and will press me more closely to His Bosom.

There are preachers so sonorous and fluent in mere wordiness, that the hearers are quite satisfied to hear the fluent high-sounding wordiness, though there be within it great barrenness of thought, and no spiritual refreshment. The shallow people, who have been accustomed to this sounding-brass-and-tinkling-cymbal preaching, cannot endure the ever-fresh flow of living thought. For, being long accustomed to a sound and ear ministry, and not

being used to a thought and soul ministry, under the former they are in their element, but under the latter they are like fish out of water. • In a spiritual element a carnal people cannot breathe with freedom. To be popular, it is not enough that a man be a good talker, he must also be a shallow thinker. Abide in the low plain of thought, and the multitudes will throng you ; but ascend to the mountain height of purer thought, and your multitudes will be reduced to a few disciples.

*“ Abide with us : for it is towards evening.”* As ripe fruit is sweeter than green fruit, so is age sweeter than youth ; provided the youth were grafted into Christ. As harvest-time is a brighter time than seed-time, so is age brighter than youth ; that is, if youth were a seed-time for good. As the completion of a work is more glorious than the beginning, so is age more glorious than youth ; that is, if the foundation of the work of God were laid in youth. As sailing into port is a happier thing than the voyage, so is age happier than youth ; that is, when the voyage from youth is made with Christ at the helm.

The voyage of human life under any other Head than Christ, and under any other wind than the wind of His Spirit, is sorrowful beyond all expression. Whatever port is reached, the port of Peace,

the joyful, Eternal Home, cannot be reached. The vessel in which we are passing over the sea of mortal life is always driven by contrary winds, till the Lord embarks. All voyagers, who know the pleasantness of having Christ on board, and the certainty of getting safe to land under Him, pray Him with all their hearts to abide with them. The loving, longing prayer, "*Abide with us !*" is always from those who have previously been acquainted with Him.

. *Abide with us*, and converse with us about the "things not seen as yet." Tell us of the life after death. Bring down upon us the holy powers of the world to come. *Abide with us !* our depraved nature will grow weak in Thy Presence ; the sweet awe of Thy Spirit will restrain us from evil ; the fever of worldly lust will die out of our hearts, if Thou art near ; pardon for all our sins will flow through and through our souls, and wash out all the stains, if Thou dost bear us company. Journeying with Thee, we shall undergo a complete change of nature ; Thy Holy and sweet Spirit ever in contact with our spirit, we shall become new creatures as we go along.

*Abide with us*, that we may see Thee in everything, and everything in Thee. Our joys and our successes will not hurt us, if Thou art in them. Our crosses and sorrows will not lie heavily upon us, if Thou art in them. Let us grow older under the charm of Thy Presence. In time of sickness and need, let us not have Thee to seek.

*"Abide with us: for it is towards evening."* Our sun will soon be setting—already shadows are stealing over our sky; *Abide with us*, and make our evening bright with Thine own light. Our way will grow darker and darker, if Thou art not with us. It cannot be dark where Thou art. We are afraid of everything without Thee. We are afraid of nothing with Thee. We are Thy creatures, Thou hast loved us, and died for us; *oh, abide with us!* Stay with us through the night, and introduce us to the Morning of Immortality.

It is written: *"They constrained Him: and He went in to tarry with them."* My soul, wilt not thou also constrain Him?

## THE BEAUTIES OF HOLINESS, OR THE DAY OF DIVINE POWER, ISSUING FROM GOD IN CHRIST

Who could suppose that Psalms xxii. and cx. both referred to the same Person? In the former, He is the most miserable of men, forsaken of God, and yet crying after Him with tears, night and day. He is "a worm and no man, a reproach of men and despised of the people." Terror has made Him weak "like water," put all His "bones out of joint," made His "Heart like wax," so that "it is melted in the midst of His bowels." His "strength is dried up; His tongue cleaveth to His jaws; He is brought into the dust of Death." He is like one helpless in the hands of terrible enemies,—“dogs,” “bulls,” and “a roaring lion.” He is stretched on the instrument of torture, so that all His “bones” are distinctly visible, as though they were “looking and staring upon you.” “His hands and His feet are pierced,” that He may be suspended from His own bleeding wounds. And being “cut off out of the land of the living,” His murderers “part His garments among them,” rending the

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outer into fragments, and casting lots for the inner.

But in this Psalm we find no trace of *such a person*. The Person of this Psalm is neither weak nor miserable, He is not only not a worm, He is higher than the Heavens,—He is at the right hand of JEHOVAH. He has enemies, but they have no power over Him : He is *ruling* in the midst of them, and they are *subject* to His will. He is *sitting* in the throne of Almighty Power, and His enemies are being reduced to their place, under His feet. Nothing can exceed the humiliation and distress of the person speaking in the twenty-second Psalm : nothing can exceed the power and glory of the Person spoken of in this. Yet they are not two persons, but ONE.

The poor Jews have not solved the riddle unto this day. They can recognise the Messiah in the latter Psalm, but they know Him not in the former. They can appreciate His Kingly magnificence according to Psalm xlv., but in Isaiah liii. He is altogether a stranger to them. All that is said about His Throne, His Power, and His Dominion, is very intelligible ; but weakness *and* Power, humiliation *and* Glory, a Cross *and* a Throne are wholly unintelligible. Christ's question is still, in their hands, unanswered : "He said unto them, How say they that Christ is David's Son ? when David himself saith in the Book of Psalms, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, till I

make Thine enemies Thy footstool. David therefore callèth Him Lord, how is He then his Son?" (Luke xx. 41-44). "Blindness hath happened to Israel," "the veil is upon their heart." Otherwise they might discern, even in Psalm cx., that the day of Messiah's power succeeds the day of His weakness. For the words, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy Power," imply another day, during which "there was the hiding of His Power," and in which His people were not willing.

*"Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy Power,—in the Beauties of Holiness, from the womb of the Morning."*

I. We must not fasten upon the words, "Thy people," the universal sense of *all* people, nor the loose, general sense of *people*. The sense is very definite, and we have no authority for making it indefinite. "*Thy* people shall be willing." There are a people who, even in the day of the Divine Power, will not yield to the persuasive grace of God, but who, under the highest influences and attractions, still abide in the stubbornness of self-will. There are some who "do always resist the Spirit." And there are a people who only wait for a fuller revelation of Divine Truth and Love; who will respond to their Redeemer's call as



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soon as they feel His sweet "Power" constraining their hearts. These latter are the people who, prospectively, are called "*Thy* people." Upon these the day of Life-giving power operates like "life unto life;" but upon the former, like "death unto death."

II. "Thy people shall be *willing*." Willing to do what? They shall be willing, while others are unwilling. The simple term "*willing*" is very expressive. It denotes the beautiful condition of creatures who suffer themselves to be wrought upon, and moved, according to the will of God. They suffer God to work in them to will and to do. They are *willing* to die unto all sin, they are *willing* to crucify the old man, or self, in order that the new man, or Christ, may be formed in them. They are *willing* to be weaned from their own thoughts and purposes, that the thoughts and purposes of God may be fulfilled in them. They are *willing* to be transferred from nature's steps of human descent, to God's steps of human ascent. Or, to abide by the simplicity of our text, God is Will, and they are "*willing*." God will beautify *them* with salvation, because there is nothing in them to hinder His working. They will be wise, they will be good, they will be lovely, they will be *like God*, for they are "*willing*"; and there proceeds from God a mighty spirit, the whole tendency of which is to make His creatures like Himself.

III. "Thy people shall be willing *in the day of Thy Power.*" What are we to understand by this *day of Power*? The Psalm is addressed by the Lord JEHOVAH to His Son. David is but the reporter of what he heard "in the Spirit." "The Lord said to my Lord"; David writes, therefore, from the mouth of Jehovah. The Psalm dates from the Resurrection of Christ. He is the only-begotten from death. He is new-born from the grave, He is the first-fruits unto God from the dead. "Sit Thou at My right hand. . . . Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy Power." The day of His Power commenced with His ascension, and the day of Pentecost witnessed the first grand fulfilment of the promise, in the three thousand who became "willing."

IV. With peculiar force and fitness, the Day of His Power is spoken of as comprehending "*the Beauties of Holiness*"; and these, as issuing "*from the womb of the morning.*" If it were a subject for a creature's tongue, we might speak of the Eternal Generation of the Son under this text. Imagine the Morning, from Eternity, emerging from the womb of Godhead. Imagine the Darkness, which is "dark through excess of Light," and from such a Womb contemplate the procession of the Eternal Morning. This was the outbirth of the Power of God, the generation from Eternity, of the only-begotten Son, the Word, which was in the beginning

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with God, and which was God. Before the foundation of the world, He *was*; before Creation's morning, He was the Morning, the Eternal Morning. What in the Father was inscrutably, unsearchably hidden, in Him was brought out to view. The ground of God is the Father, God manifested is the Son, or the Eternal procession from the Eternal ground. And all the Beauties of the Eternal Son, who proceeded from the Bosom of the Father, were "the Beauties of Holiness;" and the Beauties of the First and Holy Creation were but the types and shadows of His uncreated Beauties.

V. *These same uncreated splendours had to be brought through Death into our Humanity in Christ, in order that He might be "declared to be the Son of God, with power, according to the Spirit of Holiness, by the Resurrection from the dead."* As the Eternal Father is the womb of His Son's Divinity, as the Virgin Mary was the womb of His Incarnation, so from the Grave, as from the hitherto barren womb of darkness and death, issued the Morning, bearing on its brow the Beauties of Holiness, *in our nature*. The splendours of Godhead shone from the Man, and all power, both in Heaven and earth, came into His Hands.

VI. Under this Power, viz. the Power of the Beauties of Holiness in the Lord Jesus Christ, thousands and tens of thousands have become

“*willing*” to submit themselves to Him, as to their Lord and their God. The Beauties of Holiness, which are the beauties of the Divine Nature, are given to Him, as Man with men, to operate the same into all the “heirs of salvation,” that is, throughout His whole Body, the Church.

VII. As no one in earth or Heaven is worthy to speak of “the Beauties” of the Divine Nature, so no one can anticipate *the Beauty of the Church, which is to be the manifestation of “the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.”* All the colours, charms, and beauties of the visible creation, and all the glories of the invisible Heavens, and all the lovelinesses of angels, are but a very partial flowering of the Hidden Beauties of Divine Holiness. All human excellences are also “Beauties of Holiness.” Sin has no Beauties. Wherever, in any single creature, beauty lingers, there sin has not finished its work. Meekness, Humility, Purity, Peace, Contentment, Gentleness, Love, Joy, are the flowers of the human soul, and the fruits of the Holy Spirit. If we are often struck with the charm and sweetness of the human soul, as it looks upon us from the eyes and countenance of corrupt materialism, what exquisiteness of form and colouring, and what sweetness of expression, will the perfected spirit give to its own Heavenly Countenance! If such is the energy of the Divine Nature, that its Beauties spring forth from the earth, look down from the

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stars, and even throw their shadows within fallen souls, what must be the ways and fruits of the Divine Holiness, in the pure virgin soil and element of Eternity !

VIII. If it is impossible to conceive the Beauties of Heaven, *what are the Beauties of God ?* All the beauties of all the Heavens and all the angels have been played forth from their Eternal hiding-place in the Divine Nature. To say that God is in Himself a compacted universe of sweetnesses, beauties, and splendours, is to speak very unworthily, for endless universes lie hidden in the Bosom of the Infinite Nature. Heavens, and Heavens of Heavens of beauties, are observing a most sacred reserve in Him. The Heavens must improve, and the creatures must mature in wisdom and holiness, yet for ages of ages, before they will be capable of reflecting the higher, not to say the highest, beauties of "the Father of Lights." Beauty is the robe of Holiness : the more Holiness the more Beauty. To all Eternity, we can imagine the first and loveliest of all God's creatures praying : "Let the Beauty of the Lord our God be upon us !"

IX. *In proportion to the sympathy between Christ and the Church will be the success of Christianity.* If the Church be rent into parties and distracted with internal strife, if she meet the people with

dry words, instead of warm human souls glowing with living inspiration from their risen Lord, if she be clothed with cold solemnities, rather than with the Human Goodness and Beauty of Jesus, she may multiply hypocrites on the earth, but she will not convert *the hearts* of the people unto God.

Let a Church arise in the earth clothed with the Beauty of God, showing forth in herself the sweet Human Majesty of the Lord Jesus, and nations of people would come to her Light, and kings to the brightness of her rising. All those who now despise her would bow themselves down at the soles of her feet.

“Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy Power,—in the Beauties of Holiness from the womb of the Morning.”

X. Let us pray. “Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.” Let the day of Thy Power dawn within Thy Church. “Let the Beauty of the Lord our God be upon us.” “God be merciful unto us, and cause the face of Thy glory in Jesus Christ to shine upon us: *that Thy way may be known upon earth, Thy saving Health among all nations.*” Amen and Amen.

## AIDS TO THOUGHT

**THE** tree, that waves its branches so freely in the great expanse, and spreads out its leafy surface towards Heaven, so eager for light and for heat, struck its root in secret, underground, in great darkness and bondage. Take heed that you do not undervalue your time of spiritual darkness and conflict. The Joy of Eternity often strikes its root in very bitterness of spirit. Meekly fulfil all your groaning, and patiently abide your time in darkness,—“looking unto Jesus.” Do you know that you would not so painfully feel your darkness, if the Holy Sunlight did not underlie it? The Diviner the Sunlight at the centre, the painfuller is the encompassing night.

Deep, earnest thoughts have often stirred in me on bodily abstinence, as the condition of helping the spirit through the strait gate of opposing animalism, into the sweet and holy Paradise element. There is an element in which Jesus is the Prince, and there

is an element of which Satan is prince. While we appropriate the elements of the nethermost prince, we may be strong in the powers of nature, but perhaps not so strong in the life that is hid with Christ in God; for in the exercise, and indulgence, of our fleshly appetites, we do not breathe deeply enough to inspire the holy element of our risen Prince. Finding that deep and holy spirit-breathing was suspended during bodily enjoyments, godly souls have often interdicted the gratifications of the flesh, in order to help their spirits in the God-ward direction.

I fancy, before we can become invincible men in the power of the Divine Might, we must come to the encounter of our deadly enemies in the wilderness of privation, and then the Devil and his angels tempting us, and God and holy angels helping us, we must get a clean victory over the former, that they may know us, and leave us alone to our life and work in God.

If hunger for the corrupt bread of nature was the fall of man, if the actual eating of the same developed in man the corrupt body of flesh; then a hunger for the incorruptible bread of righteousness is an evidence that the new life in Christ is awakened in man, and the actual eating of that new and living Bread, which is the flesh of the Son of Man, will develop again in man the incorruptible nature. As sensual souls abstain from the Eternal Bread, and surrender body and soul to nature's bread, the



holiest souls have at times abstained from nature's bread, in order to turn their longing appetite wholly to the Bread of Eternity.

I read too much, I think too much, I do too much, I am too much. In this muchness, the Devil has his castle. God is for quality: the Devil for show and quantity. God commends to me the "little child": the Devil commends to me the great man, the learned man, the talented man. God commends to me the "little flock": the Devil tempts me to join my soul to some great Babylon, reformed or unreformed, he cares not which, so that it be Babylon, and not the little flock.

Experience has decided that the early morning air is much more inspiring and vigorous than the evening. What is the law? Is not the atmosphere, like all other substances and tissues, spoiled of its energy by the action of light and heat? Does it not, like the vegetable and animal kingdom, require rest? After a night's rest it is recruited and young again.

Joy fatigues the spirit in the same way, and requires rest from delight, no less than the body requires rest from labour. Grief, like night, is

salutary. It cools down the soul, by putting out its feverish fires ; and if it oppresses her, it also compresses her energies. The load once gone, she will go forth with greater buoyancy to new pleasures. The night of death is a wise and merciful conclusion to the excitement of mortal life ; with a calm, beautiful, wondrous strength, the regenerate spirit enters upon its new life.

Time and Eternity touch me ; for I am both. Time assaults me for the dust which I have, and insists that I give back to the Dust every atom which I have derived therefrom. Eternity appeals to me for the spirit which I have. Owing to these two claimants, the partnership will soon have to be dissolved between my soul and body, that Earth may take its own, and Eternity its own.

## THE YOUTH AND BEAUTY OF ETERNITY'S MORNING, STANDING STILL UPON THE BROW OF JESUS, FOR EVER

I. If the Beauties of the Divine Humanity of Christ have faded from the brow of the Church, they have not faded in Him. The powerful authority of the Divine Beauty abides in unaltered and unalterable freshness with Him. The Church may therefore become new again, yea, young again, from Him. And I add, without a misgiving, the Church *will* put on her beautiful garments, and assert the power and glory of Holiness as it is in Jesus. The Church will yet arise from the dust, and, by communion with the Eternal Youth of her risen Lord, will put on more than her Pentecostal freshness and youth, and by the Beauties of Holiness which are the beauties of Humanity, will attract unto her "the heirs of salvation."

II. Everything young and fresh, everything bright and smiling, everything buoyant and happy, may be traced to the perpetual youth of Godhead, which streams forth for ever and ever, impregnating all receptive souls and substances with its own quality.

*"Thou hast the dew of Thy Youth."* It is owing to the unchangeable youth of the Son of God, that every new-born babe, after thousands of years, preserves the freshness and the beauteous innocence of the first-born child of Adam. The fulness of life which rises and dances in every young heart, and the living sunbeams which play upon the face of youth, are from the same one and only Eternal Source.

And after myriads of spring-times in myriads of planets, each succeeding spring is as fresh and full of young vigour and beauty as were the springs before the flood.

Every babe, and every spring, and every new morning, are world-types of the everlasting youth of our God. There is no light like the early morning light, there is no air like the early morning air, there is no water like the dew of early morning; and when do the birds sing as they sing in the opening day? Every morning is a new sermon on the youth of Jesus. And the new life that rises with us in the morning, after our nightly death in sleep, is a daily demonstration that life continues young and fresh in its Fountain-Head.—"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." The eternal yesterday saw Him young, He is young to-day, His energies will abide unimpaired and young for ever.

III. Dew, like liquid crystal, bespangles the

garment in which the young day presents himself, rejoicing before us. Our summer earth is given to us from the bosom of night, with this dripping mantle of infancy upon her. But what so transient, so visionary, as the Dew of the morning? It is the very type of instability. It greets us silently, with soft glances, from its myriad of myriads of eyes; we hail it, admire it, we feel young in its presence; but it is gone, exhaled in an hour. But Jesus has the beauty of Eternity's Morning upon Him to-day, and will retain it for ever. As though He were but now proceeding from the Father, He wears unchanged the pledges of His youth. The childhood of the Only-Begotten of the Father knows nothing of age. He is God from God, and the Holy Ghost teaches the late children of time to call Him "*the Holy Child Jesus.*" In the Beginning, which was without beginning, like a child He was "with God," "rejoicing always before Him." And from the womb of the Resurrection morning He ascended, in the clothing of our glorified Humanity, to inherit *the youth* which He had with His Father before the world was. Everlasting Morning sits upon His brow, and comes forth from Him as the regenerative power of all souls. With Him the fresh and fragrant morning, the rich, dewy morning, standeth still for ever. From Eternity, He has worn His new-born Beauties, "the Beauties of Holiness;" and all future generations, and Heavens, will see the same clustering upon Him, world without end.

IV. *Heaven abides young through His Youth.* The Eternity of Heaven will but perfect the youth of its first morning. Every heir of Heaven, on being born from death into blessed, primitive Eternity, finds it morning. Heaven must receive contributions from unborn generations, and continue perfecting for ages, before it will be a mirror to show forth the Youth of the Only-born of the Father.

V. Lift up thine eyes, and behold the heavens, and consider the hosts of stars, how old they are, and yet how young! Abraham saw them as we see them. The first time the sun set, Adam found them all there. He could not but feel that they were the work of ONE who was in all the power and vivacity of His Youth; and their aspect is the same to-day. The universe bears no sign of its being the work of dull age. The tremendous velocities of the planets remind us of the fiery energy of youth, of Almighty Youth. Youth both expresses and delights itself in fleet motion: no rapidity is too great for the young spirit. And the sublimities of creation seem to bring before us the boldness and the ardour of Youth. The succession of ever-new buds and flowers, of blossoming trees, and of singing birds, are also evidences that Youth in the Creator is unwearied and inexhaustible.

VI. And though He appeared in our nature expressly to bear our sins and sorrows, yet both

friends and enemies were impressed with *the energy and originality of His character*: two unquestionable signs of youth. \*

When He first opened His lips in the presence of the doctors, the Dew of His Divine, no less than of His human youth, was upon Him, and grey-headed Rabbin stood astonished before Him. About twenty years later He introduced Himself to the world, not only as a New Man, but as a New Teacher. As soon as "*He stood up to read*" the people lost their usual vacancy and inattention: "the eyes of every one in the synagogue were fastened upon Him." They hung upon His lips, and "wondered": so fresh and so sweet were "the words that proceeded out of His mouth." His doctrine distilled as the Dew. He spake as one who saw the old creation with young eyes, and as one who felt the poetic relation between *all* things and man. With Him all truth *was human*, and nothing inhuman but the evil and the false. And His last discourse was the freshest, the sweetest, and the youngest. No man ever spoke like this Man, and He never spoke as He then spoke. It was like the welling forth of Light and Peace, in one smooth and even stream, from the hidden depths of His own beautiful spirit. Every sentence is a treasury of Divine wisdom and consolation, every word savours of inward strength and rest. It was the meek outflowing of His Eternal Youth in a triumph of peace,—on the very eve of the bloody

sweat, and of His last and fearfulest conflict with the powers of Hell.

VII. And what was His Resurrection but His Divine energy asserting the victory over Death and the Grave, and crowning our flesh with "the power of an endless life"? Our poor humanity, which "was crucified, dead, and buried," came forth from the sepulchre, God-like, and glorious with Immortal Youth.

VIII. Nor does anyone ever think that Jesus, even as man, is older to-day than when, clothed with the Beauties of Holiness, He ascended to Heaven. And when we "see Him as He is," in His own eternity, we shall see Him encompassed with the freshness and beauty of the Morning;—"as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen."

IX. How will the sight of Him affect us? If, having not seen Him, our love to Him is so deep, so strong and tender, how shall we contain ourselves, when His Person, in all the ardour of His Eternal Youth, clothed with the Beauties of Divine Holiness, shall be revealed to us? For His prayer will be answered; we shall "behold His Glory." We shall "see Him as He is." We shall be eye-witnesses of the full meaning of the words: "*Thou hast the Dew of Thy Youth.*"



X. Our souls must be endowed with the Beauties of His Holiness, we must be made partakers of His Divine Nature, we must share in His Immortal Youth, or we shall not be able to endure the presence of His Glory.

XI. Young men and maidens, in the flower of your mortality, acquaint yourselves with Jesus ; for thereby good shall come to you. The sear and the withered, the cold and the dull, the old and the dead, are repulsive to you ; we do not invite you to them, we invite you to Jesus. Look at the sun, how bright and young he is, after these thousands of years ; and think how young and glorious Life must be in Him, who giveth to all suns and angels their beauty and their youth. You have heard of the great love, stronger than death, wherewith He has loved you, and still loves you ; of His wondrous works, visible and invisible, and of His yet more wondrous humiliations, on your behalf ; you have heard that there is neither help, nor hope, for your immortal nature, apart from Him ; that without Him you can do nothing but perish ; and these are affecting and weighty considerations ; but at present our subject charges us to commend Him to your hearts on the ground of *His own Eternal Beauties*. By the splendours of His Holiness, therefore ; by the unfailing sweetness of His Majesty ; by the might and meekness of His Humanity ; by the everlasting spring which smiles in His Presence ;

and by the ceaseless play of His charms, the charms of Eternal Youth; we press you to forsake death, to embrace the feet of Jesus, and become the heirs of His Kingdom and Glory.

XII. All who love Him shall shine forth in His Kingdom, in the glory of *perpetual youth*,—as the sun for ever and ever. Trust in Him, love Him, “abide in Him,” and the energy and freshness of His Life shall spring up in the Heart of your heart. This is the Divine refreshment of which He speaks: “Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will refresh you.” That is, I will give you the Life which is for ever new and fresh. It was of this He spoke to the woman of Samaria: “The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” And hear how the Holy Ghost teaches the friends of Christ to triumph under the decay of nature: “On this account we are not discouraged; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward is *made new* day by day.” “Put off the old man which is corrupt, and be *made anew* in the Spirit of your mind. And put on *the new man*, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” Thus teaching us the thrice blessed doctrine, that human nature, though corrupt, guilty, and perishing, may be made incorruptible, holy, and *young again*, through the Holiness and Youth of the Divine Nature in Christ. As we have already

seen in the Book of Psalms, the crown of "all the benefits," which the Almighty Father confers upon His children, is *the renewal of their youth.*

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not any of His benefits: He forgiveth all thine iniquities! He healeth all thy diseases! He redeemeth thy life from destruction! He crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies! He satisfieth thy mouth with good, so that *thy youth is renewed* like the eagle's!"

XIII. You have heard of persons in extreme age, whose spirits have been dead to everything earthly, and who have long ceased to hear familiar voices; but, on being asked whether they knew Jesus, have shown that, in the ground of their spiritual nature, they were younger than in their youth. It would seem that the spirit had retired deeply within, to dwell at court with Jesus, and would not, therefore, respond to calls from the flesh and the world. But within the dead body, and at a considerable depth from the withered face, the spirit abides young and genial as spring flowers, and serene as the everlasting stars; and only touch the right chord, and you shall see the spirit come forth, and spread the sunshine of youth over the furrows of age. It is not in the power of centuries or millenniums to write one mark of age on the soul where Jesus is.

XIV..Truth, what can affect truth? and Love, what can affect Love? and Holiness, what can affect Holiness? Truth, Love, and Holiness are Divine, and always young and beautiful. The beauties with which they invest the soul, have nothing temporal about them: they are the beauties of Eternity. Come to Jesus, and you will come to everything that is Holy, True, and Good. Embrace Jesus, and you will embrace all "the Beauties of Holiness": they abide in Him, in the Divinity of their youth, for ever. Follow Jesus, obey Jesus, and He will make and keep you young for evermore, and in distant ages we shall see you clothed with the everlasting morning, and approximating towards the rosy perfection of your youth.

XV. Yes, Eternal Life, which is Eternal Youth, is the gift of Christ, and will you stand aloof from Christ? Take with you words, and go to Him: ask Him to take from you all your old things, and especially the old nature of sin, and to give you His new nature, and with it, all new things; and I promise you, in the name of the Lord, that your age shall be more cheerful than your youth, and carry within it a deeper joy, and that when you leave the world, you shall be younger than when you came into it; and whereas, the order of nature is to grow old and to die, after death you shall become younger and younger, more beautiful and more beautiful, and more and

more exultant in the fulness of life and bliss, to all Eternity.

XVI. O Jesus, my Eternal Mercy, forgive me! O Jesus, my Eternal Holiness, renew me! O Jesus, my Eternal Wisdom, guide me! O Jesus, my Eternal Goodness, satiate me! O Jesus, my Eternal Beauty, clothe me! O Jesus, let Thy Eternal Youth flourish within me, and upon me. Amen.

## AIDS TO THOUGHT

**EGYPT** will do very well for Israel, God's Son, while he is a junior, but Egypt cannot complete his education. Israel must go forth out of Egypt, yet not empty, as though Egypt contained nothing worth preserving, but full rather, to justify God, who chose it as a school for His child. Egypt ruins the Egyptians, because it is their all, but it serves Israel, because in him it becomes subject to God. Egypt comprehends not God's purpose, but God's purpose comprehends Egypt. Egypt, India, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, all have a place in the footstool of the King of kings, without any detriment to His Throne.

“Let us make man in our image.” Such is man's height and depth and breadth and mystery. He has not come from one principle or distinction of the Divine Nature, but out of all principles. Man is the image of the whole Deity. There is in him a sanctuary, for the Father, and for the Son,

and for the Holy Ghost. "We will make our abode with him."

If you have in you the Living Substance signified by Jesus Christ, how meekly and contentedly you can go by the name of infidel, or heretic, among those who know the name Jesus better than the nature and Spirit of Jesus. They may not appreciate your substance: you need not envy their shadow.

The early Christians were called Atheists by the Pagans, and cast to the wild beasts for the same. Learn that you may have a very bad name, and yet be in very good company.

Heaven and Eternal Glory are but the full Flower of the precious Seed which Divine Grace has hidden in the wintry soil of our hearts.

Crutches are not elegant, but useful. Yet, blessed are they who have no need of them. Æneas can throw away his crutches, for Jesus Christ hath made him *whole*, and he is able to follow his Maker on his own sound legs. It may

be expected that the makers and vendors of crutches will cry out lustily against Æneas for the disuse of their wares.

Caution! Æneas is no example to those who are *not* made whole; let all such retain their crutches, and be thankful for them.

Beware that thou dost not hasten thy seedling life-tree into bloom. Hasty development is fatal to mature fruit.

As all the Hells of which we are in danger, as well as all the Heavens which we can possibly inherit, are already in us (as seed principles), it cannot be given to us to win any new Heaven, or new mansion in Heaven, except by the conquest of the Hell that is set over against it. But let us be thankful that we can enter Heaven, and new Heavens, at any price.

Only those who wait upon the Bible through a life-time of prayer, study, and patience, can be rewarded with an intelligent and beautiful reverence for it, as for "the Wisdom of God in a mystery." Think! it is not simply Wisdom, but the Wisdom



*of God*, and not simply the Wisdom of God, but the Wisdom of God *in a mystery*.

Very notable is the agreement between the Book and every man's *deep* nature. "Deep calleth unto deep." The Bible is the only *profoundly* human thing in the world. The world, and all that is in the world, are in agreement only with our shallow nature. When conscience awakes from its sensual slumber, there is a marvellous agreement between its suspicions, its fears, its dark utterances, and the Old Testament. The true Mount Sinai is in the human soul. But there are also deep and far-reaching longings in man, as well as conscience, and the New Testament is a complete answer to all these longings.

The Bible seems to be the law of my own being outwritten. It meets every difficulty, it throws light on every mystery, it supplies every want, it leaves nothing to be desired.

There is much in the Book to exercise both patience and hope; and I need both. I need patience, under the present dark and corrupt condition of nature; and I need hope, that the mystery of God will be finished. It is finished in our Lord Jesus Christ. When all the redeemed shall have the Spirit of Christ for their spirit, and when all matter shall be like unto His glorious body, then the mystery of God will be finished also in the universe. "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!"

The abrupt and sudden method of inheriting Heaven was not found, in the case of a certain Prince and his angels, to work in the best fashion. Wherefore we may congratulate ourselves upon our hard struggling and slow progress. The last of God's creatures will sit down among the first of God's creatures, with no small accumulation of substantial, because hard-earned, interest.

Hast thou noticed well the distinction between Truth, and the expression of Truth? or art thou one of the foolish, to whom thine own religious palaver is Truth? Words are not Truth, books are not Truth, though words and books may be *the expression* of Truth. Truth can no more be printed than the atmosphere can. The word atmosphere can be printed, so can an analysis of its properties; but in what way will the best analysis of the atmosphere profit a man, if his lungs do not inhale the thing itself? Truth is the breath of God: the breath of God is more spiritual than atmosphere, and yet it is the first of things, both as to substance and power. By it, we are told, "the Heavens were made." Dost thou know that "the King of kings and the Lord of lords" is "The Truth"? and that the hosts of Heaven know *Him* by the name of "The Word of God"? Dost thou not see that the truth which every soul needs, is the Spirit of

Life, which proceedeth from the Father and the Son? If thy child should ask thee for a piece of bread, he might be very grateful and patient to hear from thee a description of bread, but, having the description, however accurate, would he feel that he had received *Bread* from thee?

Wilt thou not learn, then, that Truth may be, where there is neither any spoken, nor printed, description of it? and also, where there is even an infallible description of it, the Living Substance and power of Truth may not be?

Learn also, if thou hast the conceit that thou couldst send Truth, or even a precise statement of its laws and methods, to the press, that it *is* a *conceit* of thine, and a culpable presumption. There is an Infinite Spirit of Truth which, perhaps, thou hast less of than those whom thou judgest (Rom. xiv. 10-13).

## JESUS REVEALING THE HEART OF GOD

I. "No man hath seen God at any time ; the Only Begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, *He hath brought Him out to view.*" All the purposes of God lay hid in His Bosom. All the worlds were His creation. Visible worlds and invisible worlds were all made by Him. He is the Head and King of every creature. Myriads of creations are in Him. He is rich as God is rich ; "all that the Father hath is His." "The Word was with God, and the Word was God." Yet, for our sakes, He made Himself poor. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." He put on the weakness, and the straitness, and the poverty, of the creature. "I came out from God, and am come into the world." Conceive the transition, from the Bosom of the Eternal Father, to this far and fallen world. No words can express this abasement, no line can measure this descent.

II. *Herein is Humility.* The Highest would make Himself the lowest. He who was above the Heavens would not only come down to the earth,

but would "make Himself of *no reputation*," in the earth! He would be reckoned as no one, He would be an outcast from among men, and meekly take His place amongst cattle. He would hide Himself in a hole of the earth, as though He were "a worm and no man." He chose this Humiliation for Himself. It was in His heart before the world was. The Only Begotten of the Father meditated every step and incident in His Humiliation. He would become as One "despised and rejected" of His creatures. He would fulfil the lowest office on their behalf, He would wash their feet; and, after having spoken nothing but Truth, and done nothing but Good, though innocent as a Lamb, He would submit to every indignity and cruelty, as though He were the chief of malefactors; and while dying in torture, would suffer Himself to be hissed out of the world which He came to redeem.

Is there any Humility like His Humility? Can any creature in earth or Heaven humble himself as the Lord of all creatures has humbled Himself? If we could forget that it was "The King of Glory" who was hiding Himself under this disguise of Humiliation, we should still conclude, from His unexampled Humility, that God would exalt Him above every creature, and give Him "a name above every name." If "the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth Eternity" hath said that He will both "look to that man" and "*dwell with that man who is of a contrite and humble spirit*," then on

this ground alone "the man Christ Jesus" would be entitled to "the Spirit without measure." But the truth is, that only the Highest could make Himself the lowest, only God could show in Himself the pattern of uttermost abjection. Only the Lord of all creatures could subject Himself, without a thought or feeling of resentment, to the base usage of His creatures.

And such Humiliation is worthy of God. I know of nothing more worthy,—I know of nothing *so worthy* of Him. If God has made suns and planets, angels and mankind, and *has not* humbled Himself to help and save His creatures, but some creature *has* humbled himself to become the Friend and Redeemer of the needy and the lost, then it will follow of necessity that this creature must receive, to all Eternity, more glory and love than the Creator. Compared with the glory of the Gospel, the marvels of astronomy have no glory. The self-sacrifice of the Gospel exhibits more Divine Fatherliness than all the gorgeous parade of the firmament. Is it likely, then, that the glory of the firmament is the glory of God, but that the superior glory of Christ's character and work is the glory of a creature? No words can possibly expose the weakness and carnality of the objections urged against the proper Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ. Like persons who have passed and re-passed, all the days of their life, *over the surface* of some gold mine, and who ridicule the idea of the

precious metal being found so near home : such are they who *skim our Gospels*, and find no Divinity underlying "Jesus of Nazareth." '

Humility is peculiarly the way of God. Indeed, if it were not, how could any relation subsist between Him and His creatures? Neither men nor angels could know anything of the Creator, if He did not humble Himself. To all eternity the children must abide in ignorance of their Almighty Father, if He were not pleased to show Himself to them : and to show Himself to creatures, He must humble Himself. To show Himself to fallen creatures in a fallen world, He must abase Himself. To do them service, He must come near to them : to do them the utmost service, He must become one of them, He must be made flesh and dwell among them.

I am not at all surprised that God should do this. It seems to me that the true and worthy God and Father of such a universe, must be, at Heart, such a God and Father. "I am meek and lowly *in Heart*." And might it not be expected that what God is *in Heart*, He would become in act and fulfilment? Of all things in earth and all things in Heaven, the most Godlike thing that has come to our knowledge is the history of Jesus. If "God is Love," then it follows that He would become all, and do all, that Jesus did. If God is infinite Love, and especially if infinite Love is our Father, then nothing is so likely as that "He

who was rich, should make Himself poor for our sakes, that we, through His poverty, might become rich."

All after Humiliations of our Lord were nothing to the first, namely, that of *His Incarnation*. The great Humiliation was to make Himself flesh. That being done, the manger and the Cross, and all that lay between, were *comparatively* small considerations. "Being found in fashion as a man," it is not half so surprising that He should surrender Himself to be despised and crucified, as that, being Lord of all, He should be willing to put on our mortal flesh. Self-intelligent men find difficulty in conceiving Jesus Christ to be the Lord our God, but simple hearts never did, and never will. The law is well known in Heaven, by which this sweet mystery is "hidden from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes."

III. It was an infinite Humiliation for the King of Glory to come under the roof of our house, but it was an *infinite act of grace towards us*. It was the very beginning of days to us; not to our souls only, but to our flesh also. For "the Lord of Glory" not only came into our tent, but stayed in it long enough, to change it into a becoming mansion for His Deity. He found it dull clay, but He made it more glorious than transparent gold. He found it mortal, a prey to Death and the Grave: He made it Eternal in the Heavens. It



was a strange divestiture for Him, to come under our roof, but it was a wondrous investiture and glorification of the house of our body, 'to be made the dwelling-place of the King of kings, and to go up with Him, no more a clay cottage, but a house of splendours. Henceforth even clay may look upon itself as *redeemed*, and may rely upon the promise of having its vile substance changed, and fashioned like unto the Lord's own glorious Body, "according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself."

By making Himself flesh, He made Himself poor indeed, but He brought into our poverty-stricken nature the riches of His Divine Nature. His delights always were with the sons of men; and to make them rich, He was more than willing to make Himself poor. The Eternal enrichment of mankind He regarded as recompense enough for His Humiliation. With great desire, He "came forth from the Father," bringing with Him the hidden stores of the Father, that He might fill our empty vessels. He was pleased to bring all His wealth with Him (*"all that the Father hath"*), and to hide it under the poverty of our flesh, that being hidden there, it might, in due time, make our flesh worthy of sharing the honours of His Throne. For, the Word being made flesh, nothing could save the flesh from becoming one with the Word. His indwelling changed it from glory to glory, until it became not the hiding-place of His Glory, but the

bodily manifestation of all the fulness of the Godhead.

IV. *Nothing is so little known as the Heart of God.* The people who think that they know Him best, and congratulate themselves that they are delivered from all low and vulgar notions of God, know Him least. Polished, self-righteous people cannot believe that God carries sinners in His Heart. They continue to think, with Simon, that God must maintain His dignity, by treating with great coldness and distance all persons of doubtful character. But the great, "open secret" of the Gospel is, that God is gone to be guest with sinners. This is the very pith of the New Testament, and the key to the knowledge of its mysteries. Many, who have, as they think, enlarged and worthy views of God, disdain this key, and consequently find in every page a serious "stone of stumbling and rock of offence." The Incarnation itself is a great difficulty, but it would be more intelligible, to a certain class, if Jesus had been less human and less humane. Had He come with state and ceremony, and only kept company with persons of the first class in piety, literature, and rank, the unbelief of many minds would have been greatly obviated.

"As Jesus sat at meat, *many publicans and sinners came and sat down with Him.* And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, *Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?*" Again,

*"All the publicans and sinners drew near unto Him for to hear Him. And the Pharisees and Scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." Again, when He said unto Zaccheus, "I must abide at thy house to-day," "they all murmured, saying, that He was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner."*

Long before His Incarnation it was written: "He shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence, to both the houses of Israel." Never were words more literally fulfilled. He is a "sanctuary" for the poor in spirit, for babes and sucklings, for the broken-hearted and the helpless, for all who are heavy laden with sin and sorrow; but He is as certainly "a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence," to all who are "wise in their own conceits." In the form of a servant, and especially sitting down with publicans and sinners, He is not at all like the God of the Jews;—not like the God who brought the flood upon the world of the ungodly; not like Abraham's God, who rained fire and brimstone out of Heaven upon the wicked; not like the God of Moses, who brought Israel out of Egypt, and drowned Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea; not like the God of Joshua, and Samuel, and David, who destroyed kings and nations for their sins, and gave their land in possession to Israel. No, He is not like this, for He walks by the side of sinners, and proposes Himself to be their guest. How different this seems

from the awful God of Sinai, from the Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, before whom Isaiah trembled! Yes, very different, for God has veiled Himself, that He may come near to sinners without consuming them, —more, that He may suffer the doom of sinners, and so redeem them. “O God of Israel, verily Thou art a God *that hidest Thyself*.”

This is the mystery that was hid for ages, but is now made manifest. The Power of God was revealed, the Wisdom of God was revealed, the Holiness of God was revealed, and His Goodness was revealed; but it was not revealed that an unutterable fountain of tenderness was in Him towards the ungodly. *The Heart of God* was not revealed: now it is revealed. The Lord Jesus Christ is the revelation. In Him the majesty, the consuming holiness, the wrath that had been manifest, were hidden; and the Heart of the Father, that had been hidden, was made manifest. As the Lamb was hidden in the Lion, so now the Lion is hidden in the Lamb. Nothing is lost; nothing is changed, save the manifestation. Jesus was in the bosom of the great and terrible God of the Old Testament; the great and terrible God of the Old Testament is in the Lord Jesus of our New Testament. But man is the slave of appearance: when the “terrors of the Lord” are presented to him, he does not suspect the deeper truth, that the heart of grace and meekness is present within these terrors: when the Fatherly affections of God are revealed to him in Jesus, in

the absence of wrath and condemnation, he forgets that his Judge is present. "Who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?" "O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."

*It was important that God's relation to sin should be shown,—that sin should be made to appear exceeding sinful, and an exceeding offence to the Holiness of God. It was necessary that mankind should be taught, patiently and abundantly, by most solemn and awful demonstrations, that God never will, never can give sin any quarter. But while this was being taught, the Heart of God towards the sinner was hidden. This order of development ought not to be "hard to be understood." It is precisely the course which every father adopts towards his disobedient child. At first, he reveals his abhorrence of disobedience, and makes known, or inflicts, the penalty; but afterwards, he reveals the unaltered relation of his heart towards his child. So, in these days, which from the beginning were days of promise and expectation, the same Holy God, who did variously and awfully exhibit the relation of sin to His Holiness, has manifested the relation of His Fatherliness to the sinner. In Jesus Christ, the God of Moses and the Prophets has come to reveal His heart. But mark, love and judgment are equally revealed in Jesus. In Him the love of God receives a full and clear expression, but in*

Him also sin is judged, and that with an intensity of awfulness exceeding anything that Moses taught, or Mount Sinai disclosed. Indeed, strictly speaking, sin was not judged till it was judged in Christ. In Him the mercifulness of God, and the irreconcilableness of sin with the Divine Nature, are equally revealed. Jewish righteousness and worldly philosophy are confounded: they know not their God. And in this age you need not go far to find a very arrogant, specious philosophy, which would far sooner believe so many millions of miles of sightless, senseless, heartless gaslight, or atmospheric air, to be God, than believe Jesus Christ to be our "God manifest in the flesh." According to such a philosophy, it would be a diviner thing to be dead ether, or abstract law, than a living man.

But if Jesus Christ is our God revealing Himself to His lost,—if the Gospel is the revelation of God's love to the unthankful and to the evil, *only those who regard themselves as lost, are likely to appreciate God in such a form*, and heartily to realise the way of His Grace. Persons who think that human nature only wants education, reformation, training, and the influence of good example, are not capable of a keen and lively intuition of the sweet mystery of the gospel. Let no such person expect to be convinced by argument: let him rather inquire whether his idea of what a lost creature is be not at fault, and let him cast about for some more comprehensive idea of a sinner, which shall include

himself. Let him ascertain, whether, apart from either blamelessness or blameworthiness, he is not a lost man. Let him investigate, whether a profound truth is not contained in the words, "*by nature* a child of wrath." If he has the conceit of being, by his first birth, a divine-natured creature, let him inquire how it is that a true child of God, or divine-natured creature, should be under a great curse, and doomed to suffer and die. Let him consider, that he is not in Heaven, that he cannot see God, that death, the grave, and a gulf of great darkness lie between him and his God. (A strange predicament for a divine-natured creature to be in!) Let him arouse his deeper senses, and bethink himself, that corruption, disease, darkness, fear, to say nothing of vanity, folly, and lust, all of which *are* in him, are *not* in Divine Nature. How base and miserable must be his notion of Divine Nature, to think that he is a child thereof, in any other sense than a fallen one, a *lost one*. One thing is certain, that no one who ever had anything approaching a perception of the Holiness and Glory of the Divine Nature, ever more doubted the corrupt, wrathful, lost condition of *his* nature. A divine-natured creature *could* have neither lot nor part with us, on this side the great veil. When my Lord Jesus was in the world, that which *appeared* of Him was not His Divine Nature, but His assumed human nature; and He would not allow *that* to be called good. In *that* He groanèd and was troubled. In *that* He

cried out in pain, and with tears, to be delivered. In *that* He found wrath, horrible wrath, even unto blood-sweating. In *that* He cried out, "O God, why art Thou so far from me? My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"

If such was my Lord's experience *in my nature*, can there be a doubt left of my being "by nature a child of wrath,"—a poor lost one? Because I am *a child* of God, my God seeks me and saves me; but if I were not a *lost* child, I should need neither seeking nor saving. Whoever realises these two great truths, that he is a lost one, but that he is God's lost one, will before long not only believe, but cease to wonder, that his God is in Christ to seek and to save him. And he will only be too happy to fall into the hands of his God, not as a consuming fire, but in the form and person of Jesus.

O blessed truth, and so worthy of God, that He will own His lost child, *though* "*he is a sinner*": and though he has "*devoured his living with harlots.*" The son, when he comes to himself, is bitterly ashamed, but when the worst has been said about him which can be said, the father is not at all ashamed to acknowledge him. The son himself thinks, his own brother thinks, every one thinks, after such conduct, that his father will be very reserved and cold towards him. The devil is a liar from the beginning, and this is one of the lies against God, which he insinuates into the heart of every fallen creature. His end is to slay all thought



in the sinner of returning to God, as well as to shut up and harden against him the tender affections of righteous souls. But in spite of Satan's lies, the rebel son's unbelief, and the indignation of righteous people, *the Father reveals His heart*. With emphasis, He exclaims, "*This My son!*" He unheeds the charges brought against him, He kisses him, He cannot make enough of him, He will allow no one to think that the relationship between Himself and his ruined Son has ceased.—"My Son!" It has been well said, no one knows the Heart that is in the Father, save the Son, who is in the Bosom the Father, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him. God is righteous, but there is no vestige in Him of Pharisee-righteousness. Infinitely removed is His Holiness from sin, and at the same time, infinitely near is His Heart to the sinner. Demure people, who are righteous in their own eyes, have their own notions of propriety with respect to God's conduct towards His lawless son; and believers in nature have no hesitation in deciding what God can do, and what He cannot do; but neither the notions of the righteous, nor the dreams of the learned, are any rule for God. God is His own law. God is a Father, and He knows how to get into the sinful heart of His child, and to change it into a holy one. He knows how to make His fallen one humbler than the unfallen, and more loving than they. Heart is the appeal to heart. The Heart of God, and that only, can

prevail over the sinner's heart. And love is humble : it delights in humble services. But the Love of God is the humblest of all love, humbler than woman's love, humbler than a mother's love. Condescension cannot properly be predicated of God. Condescension is an imperfection. God does nothing by constraint. Neither does He think it unworthy of His nature to enter into the closest alliance with His creatures. Nor does He *become* meek and lowly, or *assume* meekness and lowliness. He *is* meek and lowly. "O Lord my God, Thou art very great ; Thou art clothed with honour and majesty, Thou coverest Thyself with light as with a garment ;" but *in Heart* Thou art meek and lowly. The wild man judges of Thee from the lightning, from the thunder, from the tempest, and never dreams of the Humility of Thy Love. Philosophy judges of Thee from Thy power, from Thy immensity, and from the height and multitude of the stars. Only Thy friends know Thy Heart. But it ought not to be wondered at, that the worshippers of the outer court should outnumber those who find their way to the holiest and inmost sanctuary of the Heart of God. Philosophy enlarges the mental powers, but unless philosophy attains to Christian philosophy, it seldom delivers the mind from the barbaric reverence for size, distance, power, and majesty. The Meekness, Humility, and Tenderness of the Eternal Heart, are equally remote both from the knowledge and worship of all those who are

under the dominion of Pan,—the adulterous.nature-spirit. The light of Pan's temple is (with respect to the Eternal Light) darkness, and far enough from the comprehension of the Name and Nature of the only True God. The worshippers of the outer court correspond with the outer court; and the worshippers in "the secret place of the Most High" correspond with the hidden affections of the Divine Heart. They are the "babes and sucklings" whom Jesus loves, and whose rest is in His Bosom.

If "God is Love," He is infinite Love: but it is impossible to represent or conceive the ardour of *Infinite Love*. What will not human love do, if it can? If possible, it will make itself one with its object, and its object one with itself. But to infinite love all things are possible. What, indeed, is so likely, as that the Highest should espouse the lowest? Is it not a law most worthy of God, that the inmost should put on the outmost? In no other way could the creation be perfected. In no other way could the lowest and the outmost be saved from perpetually lapsing into disorganisation and corruption. It is not incredible, then, that Love should be willing to take the sinner's place. That the love of God in Jesus has done so, is the very perfection and glory of His love. In that *The Word* was made *flesh*, "The First" was made "The Last." And this doctrine will be found to be as pregnant with absolute philosophy as it is Scriptural.

The strange confessions and prayers of Jesus, His fears, His tears, His groans, as they are written in the Book of Psalms, are all explained, if you admit that it concerns the glory of God to give the *uttermost* demonstration of His Love. The uttermost demonstration is that He should take flesh, and put Himself in the place of sinners. This is Love's most God-like manifestation. It is what a righteous man would not do. Perhaps there is not an angel in Heaven that would do it. Perhaps this glory belongs exclusively to the Divine Love. The love which God commendeth to mankind is the great love wherewith He loved them, *when they were dead in sin*. "Hearken unto Me, ye that are far from righteousness: *I will bring near My righteousness.*" He says not, Come up to Me, touch My holiness and you shall be clean; but He comes down to them, becomes their guest, touches their unholiness, and so makes them clean. Sin should be called "The King's Evil"; the only cure of which is The King's Touch. But in no age can Pharisees believe that God will have anything to do with sinners. And the commonsense reply of Christ to their murmurings is lost upon them. "He spake this parable to them," hiding the kingdom of Heaven and the Heart of God in His parable: "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the 'ninety and nine, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?" "Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if

she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?" Now God is the owner of the lost sheep, and God is the owner of the lost silver-piece. Man is God's infinitely precious money. He sees in it the inherent value of His own nature. It bore originally His own image and superscription, but, having been so long subject to the action of rude elements and corrupt matter, the Divine Image is all but effaced, and the Divine writing is scarcely legible. So long has it been lost in the earth, that man himself only sees in it so much earth, bearing not the King's, but his own image. But God forgets not what it *was*, and what it still *is*, in its *latent, deep-buried essence*. He knows also that it is capable of becoming all that it was, with increase.

But why should my Lord's parable represent a *woman* to be the owner of the lost silver-piece? In the parable of the lost sheep, we can, without difficulty, understand God to be *the Shepherd*; and in the parable of the lost son it is clear that God is *the Father*. But what shall we do with *the woman* in the parable of the lost money? Think again: second thoughts sometimes bring the deeper wisdom to light. *Is not love always a woman?* Wounded love makes women of us all. Tell the sternest judge, in his sternest mood, that his child has this moment met with a serious injury, and is dying, and you will find, underlying his juridical character and authority, the heart of a woman. And is he

less a man because the tenderesses of woman are included within his masculine form? David was a man, a man of war, and a king, but how he fasts and weeps for his sick child! Is there not a womanly heart within him? His son Absalom seeks to rend the kingdom from him, and conspires against his life; but how does the king, his father, receive the tidings that the conspirator is slain? "The king was *much moved*, and went up to the chamber, and *wept*; and as he went, thus he said, *O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!*" In that day was the crust of the royal warrior broken through, and the fountain of woman's affections stood revealed. Has David less force of nature, or less majesty of character, because he holds in reserve the deep springs of womanly love? And what authority have we for supposing that the hard and cold side of masculine virtues represents God? How is it known that the affections of woman's heart are less holy, or less representative of the Divine Nature? I am inclined to give St. Paul's words both a wide and a profound sense: "Neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, *in the Lord.*" The Head of all masculine principles, and the Heart of all feminine affections, are in Him. And as man and woman make together a far higher unity than either, alone, so the types of both, in their highest unity, must be found in the Lord. "As the woman

is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman ;  
*but all things of God."*

When God created man, *in His own image and likeness*, the womanly principle and nature were in him. "Adam said, She shall be called woman, *because she was taken out of man.*" Well might St. Paul say, that man is no more without woman than woman is without man, in the Lord. It is most certain, then, that woman's most womanly affections are the likeness of affections which have their pure and perfect fountain in the Nature of God. Woman, in all the unfathomed and unfathomable depth and tenderness of her love, is a household sign unto us of the love of God. My mother is only a lesson coming very near to me, instructing me, in a form that I can appreciate, what that Heart is, from which my mother and all mothers came. If I may say so, the Heart of my God is the Mother of mothers.

*God is as incapable of being indifferent towards His lost mankind, as is a mother towards her lost child.* Lost mankind are not only *His* lost, but His *lost children*. His piece of money is Money indeed, for originally it came out of the mine of His Eternal Nature. Heathen poets, Christian Apostles, and modern philosophy are agreed, that mankind "*are His offspring.*" And does not The Source of all hearts feel? And is He not concerned for His lost? In the divinity of indifference I cannot believe. I could far more easily believe that the

Divine Heart carries a huge grief; and that "the Man of Sorrows" only partially represents the tenderness of Infinite Love. In human hearts, in mothers' love, in angelic love, and in the Person of Jesus, the affections of God have a wide and wonderful revelation; but what the Divine Affections are in their Fountain-head must be beyond all revealing and conceiving. And yet I am strongly inclined to think that, to many, one great offence of the Gospel is that it is too gracious, too tender, too womanly. They can believe in a God afar off, but they cannot believe in God "nigh at hand." They can conceive God to have Almighty Power, Infinite Wisdom and Justice, but they cannot give Him credit for Infinite Affection. They know that a woman will light a candle and go into every hole and corner, stooping and searching, until she find that which she has missed; but they have no idea that this can be a true parable of God's concern for His lost children. They are not surprised to find heart in my Lady Franklin: they are not surprised at any measures that *she* may set on foot to recover the lost one. They are not surprised that the British and American Governments should be concerned to seek, and, if possible, to save Sir John and his crew. No one said, They are not worth the expense and labour of seeking, because they are few. Not far from a million pounds were sacrificed in this search. Besides money, good brothers were not found backward to expose their own lives to



danger, in the distant hope of finding and relieving their missing brothers.

Have the English Government and people so great a concern to recover their lost, and has God none? Better say, that a drop contains more than the ocean, that a candle gives more light than the sun, that there are higher virtues in a stream than in its source, and that the creature has more heart than God. Otherwise confess that the Gospel is *infinitely worthy of the Heart of God*; and never more imagine the Great Father to find rest, under the loss of His human family, in the consolation: "They are nothing compared with my universe, they never will be missed." Whoever is under the necessity of making his God to consist in indifference, or in the quintessence of indifference, by all means, having made Him to his mind, let him keep Him. Or, when he is sick and tired of his Hindoo god, and wants to find the God of Hearts, and the God who is concerned *for him*, let him read the Gospel of Jesus.

Concluding, from what we know of the human heart, what the Fatherliness of God must be, ~~the~~ account which Jesus Christ gave of His appearance and mission upon earth is, above everything, likely to be the Truth about the Heart, and purpose of our Father-God. If any one would stoop to recover that which he has lost, God would. Our God *has* stooped, in His Son, to lift up His fallen. And Heaven *has* unanimously decided that it is worthy

of Him. The innumerable angels sing "a new song" in Heaven, the burden of which is, that God, in the Person of Jesus our Saviour, is worthy of all blessing, and honour, and glory, and power; and the penitent, meek, and loving hearts of every generation upon earth echo, "*Worthy!*"

What, make Himself a guest with sinners? Yes, Crucified between two thieves? Yes. Dead and buried? Yes. Love will assume any form, and stoop to anything to recover its lost. Who is that going forth into the midnight air, braving the pelting rain, wandering through low places and lonely places, entering into the dens of sots? It is a mother who cannot rest while her degraded son is abroad. There is nothing that woman's love will not stoop to for her lost. There is nothing that the Love of God will not stoop to for *His lost*.

God will take to Himself a human arm and a human hand, that His weak creatures, who are as weak as sin can make them, may take hold of His strength. Simple, untaught people, fishermen, publicans, harlots, sinners, *have* "believed the report"; and to all undone and helpless souls, who feel that they need an Almighty Helper, Jehovah's arm in Jesus *is revealed*. O all ye sin-bruised, Satan-bruised, world-bruised hearts, be comforted, your Father is in Heaven, you are not forgotten, He carries you in His Heart, His Son has suffered for you, and in His Son He has put away your sin, He

has raised you from the dead, and received you for ever.

It was Hell that, through Cain, in a spirit of proud indifference, repudiated the work and service of love : “ *Am I my brother’s keeper ?* ” And the idea that God sits in grand and cold estrangement from His fallen and ruined creatures comes from the same quarter, and is worthy of its source. Mankind have fallen among infernal spoilers, who have stripped them of their royal clothing, and fatally wounded them ; and God is not the cold-hearted priest who passes by on the other side, but in His only Son, He is the Divine Neighbour, or rather Brother, who says, with emphasis and infinite effect, “ *I am my brother’s keeper.* ”

V. *God is His own Minister.* His Truth is servant to His Love ; His Love is servant to His Truth. The Divine Nature is the first and highest example of the precept : “ By Love serve one another.” The law which all creatures are under obligation to fulfil descends as a Spirit of Life, from God. The Lord Jesus Christ is the first Servant of God, because He only has fully, perfectly, and to the uttermost, carried out the law of the Divine Life. “ The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His Life a ransom for many ” ; “ I am among you as he that serveth.” We heard the fatherly love of David exclaiming, “ O Absalom ! my son, my son ! would God I had

*died for thee!*" David is but a feeble type of David's Lord. David only felt for a moment the impulse of that sovereign affection which his Lord carried into act. "*He loved us, and gave Himself for us.*" The delights of the Eternal Logos always were with the sons of men. Mankind were His Absalom, for whom He was not only willing to die, but *has died*. No fact that has ever transpired in Heaven, or in earth, reflects so much glory upon God as that expressed by the brief words: "*Christ died for our sins.*" Angels before the Throne reckon the acknowledgment of this grace their highest act of worship. It is quite true that only the human nature of Christ could die; but the question is, *Why* was the Humanity of Christ willing to die, willing to die for us, and not only for us, but *for our sins*? Are we to ascribe this glory to His outer nature which was "made of a woman," or to some supposed angelic spirit in Him, or to "The Word" which "was God"? It was the *Love of God!* It was the *Love of God!* It was the Only Begotten Son, who is in the Bosom of the Father, bringing out to view the Father's Heart. The Holy Ghost by St. Paul expresses it in these words: "The kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared." The kindness and love of God towards man had often appeared before, but this was their *crowning appearance*.

VI. *Love is God's minister, and His own Love is*

*the model minister.* After the Lord Jesus, the holy angels are examples of Divine Love. From the love of God that is in them they long to be our "ministering servants." They wait upon us in pure love, and are not hindered in their service for us, because we do not appreciate their service. It is no grief to them that we do not know the kind offices which they fulfil, for the love of God is their motive, and the same love is their reward. Though we seldom think of them, and never thank them, if they can only serve us, they have delight enough. And there are in this sinful, sorrowful world not a few human creatures who hide in their bosoms angelic affections, and who live in love, and for love. Everywhere there are human hearts who long for nothing so much as to be of service to the guilty and the unhappy. The Love of Heaven is God's Presence; and the holy love which is in the world is His Presence with men. The Lord God is dwelling with the rebellious. "God is my record," said one, "how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ;" and where is the town, or the village, in which you may not find now more than one such person? "I have you in my heart," said an apostle, but God never had so many in the world, as now, who carry others in their hearts. There is not a reader of these pages who does not know someone who could say, as sincerely as St. Paul: "My heart's desire and prayer to God for you is, *that you may be saved.*"

*Love is God's minister.* Let ministers of every class and grade remember this. Let clergymen, teachers,—Sunday teachers and week-day teachers,—visitors, tract-distributors, and Bible-readers, write it on their hearts,—*Love is God's minister.* Think of it in the family, think of it in the pulpit, think of it in the school, think of it in the ragged school, think of it in the penitentiary, think of it in the jail,—*Love is God's minister.* If we had less talent, if we had only more love, we should serve God better. Love is the divine qualification for all works of human service. If you are thus qualified, it will be no effort to you to go about doing good. Or, whether you are able to go about, or not, you will still do good. *Love is good*; and does good wondrously, without thinking about it, and without knowing it. Love does good by deeds and by words, and without deeds and words,—by touches, by looks, by glances. The love of some human heart often plays its charm through you, when you know not whence it comes, nor whither it goes. Love magnetises you when you see not the magnetiser. Love impregnates the atmosphere, and when you breathe the air enters into your lungs, and the love into your soul. Unloving souls breathe *the air*, and leave *the love* for loving souls. Love attracts love. Some souls are universal attractors: love hastens to them from their antipodes, from the remotest stars, and from the highest Heavens.

*The power of Love is the power of God.* No con-

version is greater than the conversion of a strictly righteous man into a *loving man*. Such is conversion, when the Lord Jesus is the author of it. Such was the conversion of Saul. Though a righteous man, and, as he says, "touching the law *blameless*," he was yet a most "injurious" man, violent as a lion, and lusting, like a vulture, to pounce on his prey; but what a transformation was his when the Love of God took possession of his heart! Let me bring before you two passages in this man's history for your consideration. "As for Saul, he made havoc of the Church, entering into every house, and haling men and women, he committed them to prison" (Acts viii. 3). And now read the following quotation, from a letter of this same Saul of Tarsus to "the disciples of the Lord," against whom, a few years before, he was "breathing out threatening and slaughter":—"We were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: so, being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because you were dear unto us" (1 Thess. ii. 7, 8). Can you conceive a greater change in a man? How can it be accounted for? Currents from the Divine Heart in Jesus Christ had passed through his soul, and changed him. "The bowels of Jesus Christ" supplanted his fire and his fury. And yet not exactly so, but his fiery nature became an active-passive basis, fulcrum, and agent of the bowels, and mercies, and humbleness of God.

Let us therefore ascribe the glory of this change to whom it is due, not to Paul, but to "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." It is his own testimony that his tender longings, and his motherly gentleness, "as a nurse," are "in the bowels of Jesus Christ." It is our God, our own God, who is *so affectionately desirous after us*, that He is willing to impart unto us not His gospel only, *but Himself also*. The depths of God are the depths of love; but who can understand those depths of love? "The love of God passeth knowledge." The apostles, ministers, and servants of God, in and of themselves, have no more love to souls than other men; but if they are indeed His servants, they receive from Him *the love wherewith He loves men*. God only can represent God. In "all the fulness" of His love, He dwelleth in Christ, and through Christ descends, as the Holy Spirit, into the hearts of His servants, who, in their measure, are granted to represent the affections, tendernesses, and longings of the Divine Heart. Let us not rob God. "The glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" is the glory of His glory. Our gospels, our ministers, and our sacraments, are but an outward development, for the world's sake, of the Breasts of God in Christ, the secret springs of which run into, and have communication with, the bowels and mercies of the Father Almighty.

VII. We must linger here. For the very



“garments” of our Divine Healer “smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia;” and the plants that spring up in His presence “are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; with spikenard, spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, and all the chief spices.” Oh! the *Balm of God!* the *Balm of Jesus!* From Him all creation has its balm. There is balm in the air, there is balm in the sunshine, there is balm in the early morning, there is balm in the quiet evening, there is balm in the dew, there is balm in the breath of flowers. (No flower “wastes its sweetness on the desert air;” for desert air hastens to “the habitable parts of the earth,” and delights to yield its balm and fragrance to the lungs and the nerves of men.) There is balm in the green fields, there is balm on the mountains, there is balm in the wood, and there is balm by the river side. Balm springs out of the earth, and balm, by secret channels, flows to us from the holy Heavens. There is balm in a mother’s presence, there is balm in a sister’s love. Within sickness there is a hidden balm, in returning health there is balm. The balm of health partakes more of the good of the present world: the balm of sickness is a heavenlier thing. The one is a good which the senses can apprehend and appreciate: the other is like a river that floweth under, of which the resigned soul drinks, and giveth God thanks. There is balm in mild words,

there is balm in soft music, there is balm in silence, there is balm in tears, there is balm in sleep. There is balm in fellowship, there is balm in solitude, there is balm in prayer, there is balm in holy song. Balm flows to us from our "blessed dead," and balm is shed upon us by "the angel of the Lord which encampeth round about us." The whole creation is a Gilead, the Scriptures are a Gilead, the Church is a Gilead, but in the highest sense the Lord Himself is Gilead. The balm of nature is *His* balm. The beauty of spring is *His* beauty. The graciousness which I see in the countenance of those who love me is *His* graciousness. The calm of the sea and the calm of the skies are *His* calm.

"See, O see, the flashing gold  
From a thousand suns outglancing,  
See the starry Heavens unrolled,  
And the skies around me dancing:  
Yet I feel a *softer splendour*  
Flowing o'er my heart, like *balm*,  
O how thrilling, and how tender!  
It is Christ!—Creation's Calm."

The penitent and the humble, the believing and the praying, find balm everywhere and in everything; for God is everywhere and in everything. And God is Balm, "for God is Love."

But speaking *in relation to the world's need*, above all is the sinner's balm, which flows from my Lord's wounds. "*With His stripes we are healed.*"

Take the Balsam-tree for a text; for there is nothing in nature which is not a parable of that which is above nature. The Balsam-tree is but a type, in the vegetable kingdom, of the holier Essential Balsam in the Divine Nature, which was before all trees.

*Without incision*, balm exudes from the Balsam-tree: so also, before the Incarnation, did balm flow from the Eternal Father to every child of sorrow, who could apprehend it. For the Jesus-nature is eternal, and, prior to manifestation, was hidden in the Father. Though the tree does exude a most valuable balm without incision, *when wounded* it yields the balm "more abundantly:" so from the wounds of Christ flows the balm of God, more copiously, for the healing of mankind. *The fruit of the tree also*, when ripe, yields balm: the fruit of the Lord's sufferings and glorification is the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is Balm.—"*The Comforter whom I will send to you from the Father.*"

*But why must my Lord be wounded for my transgressions, bruised for my iniquities? Why must He be chastised for my peace?*

It may help *some*, if we go round about for our answer, if we appeal to dumb, yet speaking, nature. How is it that the ground has to be wounded by spade and plough, and put, as it were, to the torture under harrows, before it will produce bread-corn for us? How is it that, when the corn is produced, it must also be subjected to torture,—

must be bruised under mill-stones, ground and reground, before it will make bread for us? How is it that even then the bread is not committed to the stomach, before it has been farther bruised and mangled by the teeth? How is it that plants, flowers, and fruits only yield their latent virtues when bruised? How is it that there can be no wine till the grapes have been pressed, or trodden? Why is vegetable life sacrificed for us? Why is animal life slain for us? Why does every creature come into the world through the gate of sorrow? Why is man born to labour? Why is the sweat of the brow associated with labour? Why are labour and sorrow the price which must be paid for knowledge? Why are the holiest things most hidden? Why is God hidden from us? How is it that all things are secreted within chaff, or skin, or shell, and that violence must be done to chaff, skin, and shell in order to reach the hidden good? How is it that death is the gate of life?

If you find the answers to these questions, it will help you to the opening of the higher question: How is it that the Bread of God, the Spirit of Life, The Mercy of the Eternal Father, is not adapted to our need till it comes to us through the humbled, bruised, tortured, crucified Son of God? If you cannot answer the former questions, you will learn, at least, that *the whole of nature labours under the same difficulty as "Christ crucified."* You will see that good comes into this world through a strait

gate, the better comes in through a still straiter gate, and the best comes in through the straitest gate of all. Indeed, the absolutely best is not known in our world.

Nature will grow thorns and thistles without labour and culture, but if you will have corn-fields and vineyards, you must chastise nature, and afflict your own body and soul with hard labour. Children will grow up in ignorance and vice, without the care of parents and the labour of teachers; but not in knowledge and virtue.—Still less, without earnest painstaking, will they grow up for Heaven.

The fact is, evil thrives here, but good *suffers*. The higher and the purer the good, the more it suffers. However it be accounted for, "this whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain," brings forth in labour and sorrow, runs through its brief course of vanity, and ends in death.

Let those, therefore, who turn sulky and grumble, because they find the Cross of Christ in the Bible, have the goodness to remove the stumbling-block from Nature. For my part, I find the Cross of Christ not an untrue revelation of what *was* a Divine condition before Jesus was born, or the prophecies written. Upon whose shoulders did the burden of this fallen and degenerate creation rest, from time immemorial? Who *was* grieved and smitten to the heart by the Titans of rebellion and wickedness that were before the flood? Is it

not always the head of the house who feels most sorely the disorder, the evils, and the sorrows of his house? And who is the Head of this great house which we call universe? Is it its own head, or is God its Head? God, certainly. Then the chief pressure of its evil condition *must* lie upon Him, must it not? Surely. What countenance, then, or authority, from nature, have men to object to the Cross of Christ? The Cross of Christ did not make a new truth: it was rather the manifestation of a world-old truth.

Neither the Incarnation nor the Crucifixion is a new truth. The Incarnation reveals to me how closely God was one, and is for ever one, with creation and creature: while the Cross of Christ is a revelation, for all time, of the disharmony between God and His creation. (Natural philosophy, Pantheism, and all Pagan religions, whether Egyptian, Grecian, or European, assume a harmony. In their dark and slavish dependence on nature they have not the knowledge of nature, and still less of God.) His creation, I say, for whatever guilt, corruption, curse, and sorrow there are in the creation, it is still *His*. Therefore, from the beginning, He hath borne its griefs and carried its sorrows. Surely He hath: there was no other that could. God putting on and wearing, in a bodily manner, the condition of His creatures, was only the outward and uttermost expression of a great fact.

*God putting on the nature of His creatures, in order to make their curse His curse, was, of all others, the way to bring in universal healing.* We are sick and wounded ; but our God, in Christ, is wounded with us, and for us. He, the Fountain of Life and Health, in whom there neither is, nor can be, disorder,—He hath made Himself one with us. For all the sin and uncleanness of our nature, He hath opened up in our nature the fountain of His own cleansing, renewing virtues. By coming in the flesh, by suffering our penalty, by dying our death, He has entered into an indissoluble covenant with our fallen and ruined nature, and has poured into it His own purifying life. “He hath made an end of sins, He hath made reconciliation for iniquity, He hath brought in everlasting righteousness.” In our own blood we are perishing : through His Blood we live. “The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.”

“ Was not earth's most auspicious hour  
One darksome, sad, and wild ?  
When Crucifixion was the birth,  
Redemption was the child.”

Very soft and melting is the kindness of our God, through His bruised and suffering Son, — the smitten and slain Lamb. God was as kind before, pitied us as much before ; but His kindness could not reach us, or if it reached us, it could not touch us, or if it touched us, it could not melt us. And

the great love wherewith God hath loved us cannot affect us unto salvation till our hearts are bruised and broken into penitence. "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." Our soundness is the most fatal unsoundness. It is like a rampart against the cleansing, healing Spirit of God. The Health of His Countenance finds entrance into our souls through their wounds. "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." Deep and tender, and most endearing, is the relation between bruised and sorrowing souls and "The Man of Sorrows."

*Since "He was wounded," it has been easier to pierce and wound those for whom He was wounded.* A rent being once made, it is not difficult to enlarge it. When the Lord was wounded and bruised in our nature, the Head and Heart of mankind were wounded and bruised in Him. The breach in Him is in effect a breach in all the members of His Body. His wounds wound all His seed. His wounds are their cure. Broken hearts are God's own sacrifices. In them the strength of the world and the flesh and the devil is brought into the weakness of death; and the Holy Spirit meets with no resistance to His operations. Let there be only a soft, tearful condition, and though the soul be lying, dark as night, "in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity," the old masters must resign their prey to the mercies of God in Christ.



It is out of Satan's power to retain a bruised heart ; such a meeting takes place between the bruised soul and the bruised Redeemer, that the strengthless soul immediately passes under the safe-keeping of the power and righteousness of God. Without much difficulty Satan can convert illumination into a snare, but contrition is beyond his art.

VIII. Unhappy spirit, cast down under thy sins, multitudes of sins, years of sins !—heavily burdened as thou art, and pierced through with sorrows,—*thou mayest look to God, and hope, for “ He delighteth in mercy.”* His mercy can make *thee* a clean and beautiful, a happy and rejoicing spirit. God will be *delighted* to make thee “equal to the angels.” So humble, so loving is thy God, and so earnestly does He long to bless thee, that behold, *He stands at thy door and knocks.* Thy God is come to be guest with thee a sinner. But perhaps thou dost not know that He is standing at thy door? Perhaps thou dost not hear His knock? Shall I tell thee the reason? The door at which Jesus knocks is so far *inside*, and man has so many outside doors at *which* the world is knocking, that the Lord's knock is seldom heard, or if heard, is not heeded. The soul, too, is kept so constantly running to outside doors that its attention is very much withdrawn from the inmost door, at which the King of Heaven is knocking. But Jesus is King of Humility as well as of Glory, King of Patience as well as of Power, and therefore

He not only stands and knocks, but *waits*, that He may be gracious; for "He *delighteth* in mercy." It is as though He said: The time will come, when I shall be heard. Let the world have its day, My turn will come by and by. The soul will weary itself in vanity, and turn sick of sensual good; the thoughtless creature will become lonely and sorrowful, and in loneliness and sorrow will be thoughtful, and being thoughtful will hear My knock, and open the door.

IX. We ought to pause here to consider *the contrast between all rash and noisy methods of addressing the soul, and the method of our Divine Guest*, between the method of the Master Himself, and that of His servants. The manner of many is to make a storm at the door, not knowing that, as the door opens from within, noise from without will not open it. Or, if this method does open some outer door of the soul, it is not Christ's door, and therefore it is not Christ that enters, but another spirit in the name of Christ. My Lord cometh neither with noise nor with observation. He is an invisible Presence at the door, gently knocking, gently pressing: He will not force the door.

Who can imagine the infinite ardour, and yet delicacy, of Divine Love! the urgency, and yet the non-intrusiveness, of the Holy Presence! "*He made as though He would have gone farther*;" and at the same time longed to be received. Indeed, He

would have gone on, had not the two travellers set the highest value upon His continuance and friendship. Had they not entreated Him, pressed Him, to tarry with them, He would have withdrawn from them, in favour of more eager souls. "Blessed are they that seek Him *with the whole heart.*" With the lukewarm He never rests. Though He stands and knocks at every creature's door, He must be sought lovingly, and eagerly, or He will not be found. The heart must watch for Him, wait upon Him, long after Him, and abandon herself to His love. Both to the visits and the withdrawments of the Heavenly Bridegroom, during the night of this mortal life, there pertains an admirable secrecy, delicacy, inscrutability. "I sleep, but my heart waketh : it is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to Me, My sister, My love, My dove, My undefiled." She delayed a moment, and what was the consequence ? "I opened to my Beloved ; but my Beloved had withdrawn Himself, and was gone : I sought Him, but I could not find Him : I called Him, but He gave no answer." Therefore the Lord hath said, Blessed are they who, with ~~to~~ins girt about, and their lights burning, are found watching and waiting, "that, when He cometh and knocketh, *they may open to Him immediately.*" It is certain, then, that He will not yield to cold and formal invitations. As He never pays a ceremonial visit, He never regards ceremonial prayers. Many pray with great solemnity and earnestness for His

presence, but "He looketh on the heart," and sees that He is not longed for, not sighed after, and He comes not. But let a simple, child-like heart, without priest and without prayer-book, lovingly invite Him, and He will not withhold Himself. He preaches in Jerusalem, and does wonderful works there, but He *rests and abides* at Bethany, *with Mary and Martha and Lazarus*. The Heavenly Lover knows His lovers; and with them, and them only, He dwells. "I love them that love Me." Love can only dwell with love. But where love is, thither Love hastens to be. Love cannot resist love. The travellers loved Him, dreaded His departure, cherished His presence, "*constrained Him, saying, Abide with us!*" Love had found His own. "He went in to tarry with them."

X. *Love to the Lord, and an earnest desire for His presence, constitute a state of preparation.* The Lord is always ready to make His abode with man, and to sup with him, but man is not always ready to receive his Lord. When man is ready, the meeting, and the feast of holy fellowship, take place. As soon as the soul is prepared for an indwelling Christ, He enters as "Spirit and Life," and the unspeakable unity is fulfilled within that soul. "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit."

Henceforth there is no more knocking, for Jesus is no longer a stranger, but the Living Divine Presence in the soul. The aim and end of Christ

are realised. He has become "the Spirit of life" to His creature. The soul has become His banquet-house, wherein He celebrates His sacred supper. "If any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." The Lord supping with the soul, signifies His acceptance of, and delight in, the new-born affections of the soul. The godly sorrow, the faith, the meekness, the fear, and the young, holy love of the new man, are the bread of the Lord in the house of the soul. The soul supping with the Lord is the soul's participation in His Divine Body and Blood. "For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren." "For we are members of His Body, of His Flesh, and of His Bones."

XI. *This subject is one rather for private meditation, than for public discourse.* The relation between Christ and His Church is *sacred to Christ and His Church*. But though we speak of it, only regenerate souls will understand: the unregenerate seeing, will not see. St. Paul, speaking of the unity of Christ and His Church, says: "This is a great mystery." No one who was not a member of the body of Christ ever yet understood the Lord's words: "He that eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him." But it is remarkable that persons who have *no understanding*

of the import of the Lord's Supper have *the feeling* that it is a most solemn sacrament, and one which it is fearful to approach, except in utmost penitence, humility, and veneration. Men have instinctively an awe of the Holy Feast, as if in it, God, in some mysterious way, was "very present." Of the man who can dip his hand with the Lord in this dish, and afterwards be faithless, it is written: "Good were it for that man if he had never been born."

The words: "THIS IS MY BODY"—"THIS IS MY BLOOD," have, from the beginning unto this hour, confounded not only the world, but also the Church. When the Lord taught His disciples that no man could have Eternal Life except by eating His FLESH and drinking His BLOOD, they murmured among themselves, and none of them understood Him. Yet, instead of explaining Himself, He only repeated the same words again and again. "From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him." "*Many* went back;" for all that set out are not able to reach unto "The Marriage Supper of the Lamb." Numbers who know the outward Christ, and are remotely His disciples, know nothing of the Christ whose Flesh and Blood *are life*, and nourishment, and newness of nature, to "His Body the Church." At the last Supper, therefore, the Lord only reiterated, in the plainest, shortest way, the same great secret, without opening it: "THIS IS MY BODY"—"THIS IS MY BLOOD." For, in due time, all regenerate souls

will know the mystery; others can only know it darkly and in parable. Every child born into the natural world eats himself into stature, and thus into the knowledge of the kingdom whither he is come. No one could either have any being in the world, or knowledge of the world, unless he first derived a nature from the world. In like manner, no man can have a place in the kingdom of heaven, or any knowledge of it, unless he has first eaten into his soul the holy elements of that kingdom. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, you have no life in you."

If, then, the Church has derived out of Christ's fulness all that constitutes the Church, St. Paul is literally correct in asserting that the Church "*is His body*."—As though it were nothing less than the outgrown and developed fulness of His own Substance and Essence. Truly, the words are too great and too wonderful for our faith, until that body is begotten and formed, of which the words are spoken: "The Church is *His body, the fulness of Him* that filleth all in all." Faith in the body of Christ is peculiar to "*His body*," and it will never be found elsewhere. The Holy Ghost dwelleth in His body, and gives to the members thereof both the assurance and intelligence of the fact, that they "*are members of His Body, of His Flesh, and of His Bones*."

The Church being "the fulness," or creaturely

development of Christ's own nature, *all the "exceeding great and precious promises" belong to the Church as a matter of course.* They are already fulfilled in Christ, and must be fulfilled in His body. "All the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen." His Joy, His Glory, His Throne and Dominion, are the joy, the glory, the throne and dominion of His Church. In His last prayer, He declared, in the hearing of His disciples, that the Father loved them, *as He loved Him.* It is permitted us, therefore, to understand the testimony which the Father gave to His Son at His baptism as inclusive of the whole Church. "This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." For "He hath made us accepted *in the Beloved.*" In our own nature we are not accepted: "by nature we are children of wrath." Neither is our own righteousness, righteousness; but Christ Jesus, our Head, is "made unto us righteousness." The name by which prophecy revealed Him to us was, "Jehovah, *our righteousness.*" Truly, "the Sanctifier and the sanctified are all of one." Joseph's brethren are ashamed and confounded in his presence, and yet both he and they are the generation of one father. Concerning those whom "God hath reconciled to Himself by Christ Jesus," it is written: "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new; and *all things are of God.*"

To signify to us the absolute unity of Christ and His people, the Lord Jesus is said to praise God



in the midst of the Church. "I will declare Thy Name unto my brethren, *in the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto Thee.*" In the days of His humiliation He prayed, and taught His disciples to pray, but will He in Heaven also lead the worship of His people? Judge righteous judgment, that is, not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit, for "though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more." But as there are many voices on earth, and all these voices are *the same air* compressed into sound, and as there are many eyes, and all these eyes see with *one light*, and as there are many living forms of verdure, and all the forms are drawn forth from *the same earth by the same sun*; so are there many holy natures in Heaven,—“a number which no man can number,”—but they are all the development of *One Holy Nature*; and there are many holy joys and songs, but they are all the joys and songs of that *One Love*, which loveth all, and joyeth and singeth in all, and through all, and over all, world without end. In the Church, "Christ is All and in all." Otherwise, the creature would have in himself a ground of glorying. "But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." And not without reason: "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

As the Spirit of His Son, which He hath sent forth into our hearts, is now our "Spirit of prayer

and grace of supplication," so the Spirit of His Son, dwelling in our future glorified natures, will be our song of delight. True praying on earth is "praying in the Holy Ghost;" and all true praising in Heaven will be praising in "that one and the self-same Spirit." The song of the redeemed, which is the song of songs, will be but the expression of the infinite joy of Christ over His bride, the Church, chanted forth as the expression of their joy in their Redeemer. Angels, principalities, and powers are waiting to hear the full chorus of the song of Divine Love, which is the song of Christ, *from redeemed mankind*. "In the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto Thee."

## AIDS TO THOUGHT

I MUST honour the Word that is without me rather than the conceited light that is in me. This is very humbling, but I am by nature a dark, fallen, proud spirit, and must humble myself. It is God's purpose to magnify His Word, which is independent of my culture, above His Name in me, which is dependent on my culture.

Beware, then, of the fanaticism which gives either to reason, or conscience, an authority which only belongs to the revealed Word. A fallen spirit, even in the highest provinces of his nature, is a dismal medium for the holy Light of Divine Truth. God has "magnified His Word above all His Name." His Name is revealed to all nations, in the earth and the heavens, to spell out, as best they can. The result is a Name dreadfully clouded with the mist and darkness of nature, and with the perversity, guilt, and fear of the soul.—A botch and not a Name. Natural religion can boast of nothing beyond "trouble and darkness, and dimness of anguish." It is blear-eyed, and goes hobbling to the grave.

If the approach of Death awaken fear in you, tell Death, that you are bringing the Lord Jesus along with you, and Death, like the Jordan before the Ark, will put back, and a free passage will open before you, into Eternal Life. "What ailest thou, O Sea? and Jordan, that thou art driven back?"

But hide Christ in thee *indeed*, for it will not serve thee to *say*, "Lord, Lord." The devils will leap upon thee and prevail over thee, if the Lord Jesus be only on thy tongue, and not present, by His Holy Spirit, in thy soul. If *He* be in thee, who is the Light of Life, very Light and very Life, then, when the candle-light of thy body's life goes out, the Sun-Light of thy soul's life shall be bright about thee.

The eyes of reason are the eyes of nature, and the eyes of nature cannot see into that which is beyond or above nature. Reason sees from nature to nature: Faith sees from God to God. Reason eyes Divine Truth as an infant an egg, namely, as all shell: Faith pierces the shell and perceives the bird of paradise, abiding its time with folded wings and closed eyes, within its house of defence.

*"When he was come down from the mountain great multitudes followed Him."* Only a few select souls

can follow the Truth up its own mountain height. But Truth is meek and lowly, and *comes down* to the multitudes.

It would seem as though the world's method of education were dehumanising. The herdsman of Tekoa, or the sheep-boy of Bethlehem-Judah, is preferable to either Plato or Aristotle for all highest human purposes. Joseph is more deeply and truly human than all the wise men of Egypt; Daniel, than all the wise men in Babylon. God seldom patronises our plan of self-making. He prefers the raw material. The unschooled wilderness-man may be made the herald of the World's Hope, but there is no Rabbi in the Church, nor philosopher in Greece, capable of the office.

Yet scholarship has its laurels. Moses the Jewish lawgiver, and Paul the Christian lawgiver, were learned men. If untaught simplicity is a preferable channel for absolute truth, perhaps the forms of truth best adapted to the world require worldly aids. And it is a fact that the Christianity which has obtained throughout Christendom is not the absolute form of Christianity, but rather a

worldly-wise form :—commercial, governmental, and  
“after the manner of men.”

Love is the eternal ground of all things. “God is Love,” “God is in Christ :” root your will deeply and firmly in Him ; and no wind will do you any harm. The Eternity-tree will never thrive in shallower earth.

Cultivate simplicity and plain-spokenness, lest under your fair-seeming you hide a hypocrite. Cultivate Love as much as Truth, otherwise your truthfulness will wound without healing. But add to your Love and Truth Meekness and Humility, otherwise Satan, as an angel of pride, will secrete himself in your Heaven : and if he be the spirit of your Heaven, what wonder if in the end it become what his did,—Hell ?

The door by which the world enters the soul, in the act of opening, shuts the door by which Heaven enters. Hence, it happens that those who have their door constantly open towards the world, have their door as constantly shut towards Heaven. While worldly gains and pleasures, scenes and

sounds, are freely entering the soul by an open door, the King of Heaven stands knocking at the shut door. On the other hand, when the door freely opens to the Lord Jesus, and to Heavenly gains and joys, the door by which the world enters closes. The worldly door being shut, the Lord Jesus and the soul banquet together. The soul is then in her glory, she is dead to the world, and the world is dead to her.

Let me not be afraid of sorrow : it may open a way for the Balm of God to flow into my soul. My Lord, who told me plainly that I should have to suffer in the world, said : "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." In the gloomy and dark day I must take refuge in my Lord's wounds. Blessed springs of life (unknown and unconceived in worldly prosperity), will refresh me there. Grace and glory will find me there.

Let Jacob earn the name *Israel*, and he shall be the head of twelve princes, and the princes heads of twelve tribes, and in his twelve tribes he shall inherit all the lands of God.

Two men went up into the temple to pray, the one a very righteous man, as he seemed to himself and to others, the other an unrighteous man, as he seemed to himself and to others; but God, who seeth not as man seeth, accounted the unrighteous man the more righteous of the two. So have I seen two flowers, side by side, the one erect and without a misgiving, looking up to heaven; the other, with its head all adown upon its breast, looking only to the earth. But the flower that looked earthward, as though not worthy to look heavenward, was the more heavenly of the two. Then said I, Pride and self-sufficiency are a miserable insufficiency; but meekness and self-distrust are allied to All-sufficiency. Question: Does God always give least to those who think themselves greatest, and most to those who think least of themselves? Answer: Humility hath the palm.

“By the very reason that man is so proud and selfish, and bent on calling that most excellent in which he findeth *himself* to have made any progress, it cometh to pass that, instead of relishing the perfect forms which the Eternal Word hath put on, he turneth aside to feed on the garbage which he hath gathered from some corner of fallen nature; haply from his own reflections upon himself, haply from the imitation of another like himself, haply



from the common sense of the multitude, haply from some barren field of inanimate nature. And so it fareth to the intellect from its very degradation, and contentedness therewith, to be naturally averse from the sublime and perfect truth which is written in the Word of God. Whence the fallen intellect setteth itself up as a sufficient light. What with its expedients and its mechanical resources, it deemeth itself to be the Lord of this visible creation ; in which it frets itself to the great satisfaction of Lucifer, who is the prototype and pattern of all these bastard and fruitless intellects."

## THE WONDERFUL WORKS OF GOD

*“HE hath made His wonderful works to be remembered.”* His works of old were not remarkably remembered. It stands written against the people who saw His works and His wonders: *“They soon forgot His works.”* *“They kept not the covenant of God; and forgot His works, and His wonders that He had shewed them.”* Perhaps those works were not His *very* wonderful works? Perhaps they are to be regarded as more related to young mankind, than to the heart and mind of God? Perhaps they were accommodations to the sensuousness and servility of man? Perhaps the wonderful works which are the very expression of the Divine Mind were reserved for the fulness of times? St. Paul distinctly affirms that the New Testament works, now manifested, were always hidden in God as the purpose and end of His heart. In a certain sense, *“they were finished from the foundation of the world.”* *“The Head-Stone of the Corner”* was latent in the foundation, and in the Head-Stone of the Corner the foundation of God is brought to light.

Without contradiction, the works of His Son Jesus Christ are the works which God hath "*made to be remembered.*" These are the works which are written in mankind's heart. These are the works which are remembered in Heaven. The only effectual method of writing in the mind and memory is to write on the heart. The coming of the Son of God in the flesh ; His dominion over the flesh ; His authority, as man, over nature and over all devils ; His meekness, His patience, His silence, under cruellest wrongs and outrages ; the perfect subjugation of His own will in exhausting the cup of deadly bitterness and wrath ; His Divine sweetness, His triumphant charity on the Cross ; His death ; His burial ; His descent into Hell ; His resurrection ; His ascent into Heaven ; His power for good over all men :—*these are the wonderful works of God.* And, whatever is forgotten, these cannot be forgotten.

The dark and fearful places, Gethsemane and Golgotha, were *our* places, but the strong Son of God, for our sakes, made them *His* places, and He hath filled them with light and hope. Our place of conflict and agony, where the battle was too strong for us, He hath turned into a house of peace ; and in the cold, silent, awful castle of despair,—“the place of a skull,”—He hath opened a door of hope. The grave and Hell are our places, from which we could never redeem ourselves, but He hath redeemed us from both, and hath acquired

for our nature "the power of an endless life." Shall we not remember these works? Is there any fear of their being forgotten? There is no fear. "God hath made His wonderful works to be remembered."

I am guilty, and yet I have peace; for my Lord hath fulfilled His wonderful work in me. Truly, it is a *wonderful work*. Fearfully and wonderfully He hath made me, and that my soul knoweth right well. I am fearfully made, for I am a fallen man. I was conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity, I have gone astray from my birth, and I am under sentence of death, and *I shall surely die*. But I am wonderfully made also, for, notwithstanding my depraved, miserable nature, my sin and my desert, I have "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." My Lord hath made my sin and shame and sorrow, His, and, by making them His, they are no longer mine or His. They are not. They are behind His back, as old things which have passed away. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed them from me. And His righteousness He hath made to be mine, and by making it mine, He hath received His own with increase. I and His righteousness are both His. These wonderful works are enough to make the very stones sing for joy.\* My stony heart does sing for joy that it is no more stony. Can I forget His wonderful works? Can I forget that I was lost? Can I forget that my Lord hath found me, and added

Himself to me, so that I may never again lose myself? Can I forget that I was dead? Can I forget that I am alive, and that Christ liveth in me, so that I can no more die? O wonderful work that I was not His, but my own, and now am not my own, but His, and yet am ten thousand times more my own, by being His, for He is mine. In my heart of hearts God hath made His wonderful works to be remembered. The life and soul of His works are in me, for the Eternal Life, which was with the Father, and was manifested to the world, liveth and abideth in me. "I live, and yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Through His life in me God is become another God to me, the universe is another universe to me, I am another man to myself, and the future is another future. Since He has made me His, and made Himself mine, I am expecting things greater than can be told me : I have everything to hope for. If for my own sake I could give up my great expectations, I could not *for His sake*. Nothing is too great for me, nothing is too good for me, because I am *His*. Nor can anything be lost upon me, for the holier I am, the wiser I am, the nobler I am, the richer I am in essential honour and glory, the more will He be glorified in me.

When the outer creation and all its works, like a rude, temporary stage, shall give place to the holy creation, then shall the wonderful work of Christ not only be remembered, but be revealed in its glory. When Adam shall abase himself before God,

that he ~~was~~ the head of a corrupt race, and that all the generations of his children inherited depravity, weakness, and death, then he shall hear his children, ruined in him, but redeemed in Christ, worshipping their Redeemer, and ascribing to Him their salvation from corruption, sin, and Hell. When Abraham shall humble himself for the unfaithfulness of *his seed*, then shall he see every human creature that is in Heaven rejoicing with unspeakable joy, in being not the seed of Adam or Abraham, but the seed of the Divine Man, the Lord from Heaven. When Moses shall hide his face, and renounce his works before God, confessing that he was the deliverer, and leader, of a most degenerate and rebellious people, that he was the enunciator of laws which were never obeyed, and that he set out to bring the people to a land of promise, but never brought them: then shall he see his people, and people out of every nation, a regenerate and an obedient people under Christ, acknowledging with loud praises that Christ alone was their Deliverer, that Christ alone brought the grace by which the law was loved and obeyed, and that Christ, and Christ alone, brought every one of them to the only good land. When also the holy Apostles shall cry, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us," and shall confess that their work, *so far as it was theirs*, was a thing of nought, and that the Apostolic Church soon became an apostate Church; then shall they hear the redeemed and glorified of all nations ascribe

their new creation to the Lord alone. When "the four and twenty elders fall down before Him that sitteth on the throne, and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created;" then, falling down "before the Lamb," they shall outsing the old song, with the "new song," saying, "Thou art worthy, *for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.*" "Blessed be the Lord, for He hath visited and redeemed His people."—We were far off by *creation*; we are brought nigh by *redemption*. By nature we were the children of wrath; by our new creation we are the children of God. By creation we inherited ruin; by salvation we inherit glory.—"*Salvation* to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."

"Throughout the universe of bliss,  
The centre Thou, and sun:  
Th' eternal theme of praise is this,  
To Heaven's Beloved One:—  
Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou,  
That every knee to Thee should bow."

Both on His thigh, and on His vesture, Jesus hath the name, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." As God, it is His native right; as man, He

hath earned it by "His wonderful works." By treading the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God, and by His victory over every adverse power, *as man, and the Redeemer of man*, He has an acquired royalty. "On His Head are many crowns." The Crowns of Divinity, the Crowns of Creation, and the Crowns of Redemption, all rest there.

*The fit and proper King of a Human universe must be Human.* No being, however great, however divine, unless He were thoroughly and perfectly Human, could be the centre of unity and Representative of a Human universe. He must be one of us. He must be entirely our Brother, and yet with infinite authority as our King. In order to His infinite authority, He must be God; in order to be *our* King, He must be *Man*. This is precisely our Lord Jesus Christ. In Him Humanity is not sacrificed to His Kingly authority, but our true and proper Humanity is invested with highest power and glory. We are therefore utterly content with our King. We *rest* in Him. He is our *Beloved Majesty*. He is in all our Hearts. He knows us. He acknowledges us as His brethren. He is not ashamed of us. We are in His Heart, as He is in ours. He has not an idea of having any interests separate from us. His interests are ours, ours are His. He will subdue all things to Himself. He will make the Human universe a Human *Heaven*. "Men shall be blessed in Him: all nations shall



call Him blessed. Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be His glorious Name for ever : and let the whole earth be filled with His glory ; Amen, and Amen."

## HALLELUJAH!

HAVE you ever considered the Book of Psalms as a whole?—that it begins with doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness;—runs on through a long series of confessions, lamentations, prayers and praises; and at last ends in *nothing but praise*? It is the work of regeneration, rehearsed in Psalms of God, for the instruction and comfort of the Church in all ages. This great work of God in man struggles on, and on, through one series of difficulties after another, until it ends in victory and jubilation. God is one with man, and man is one with God, and every affection and instinct of his nature are full of joy and praise. He has been conducted, by repentance, by faith, by hope in God, by struggling, by prayer, by watching, by self-conquest, *to his end*; and he is found at length blessing and loving his God, joying and rejoicing in Him that made him. He does his best to give utterance to his divine passion; but all things in earth and all things in heaven will not fully express it. It is unutterable. He is beside himself with love. The holy fire is kindled and burning within

him : like a whole burnt-offering, his being is one flame of devotion to God. Distrust and fear have no longer any place in him. His faith has become confidence in God, his hope has become a substantial earnest of full possession, his life has become a sacrifice of love to the God of love. He is not his own. He is possessed. His soul is as a harp, or an organ, which God plays.

II. *Each of the last five Psalms begins and ends with HALLELUJAH!*—"Praise ye the Lord." And each Psalm increases in praise, love, and joy, unto the last, which is praise celebrating its ecstasy. The elect soul, the heir of God, becomes "eaten up" with the love of God. He begins every sentence with *Hallelujah*, and his sentences are very short, for he is in haste to utter his next *Hallelujah*, and his next, and his next. He is as one out of breath with enthusiasm, or as one on tiptoe, in the act of rising from earth to heaven. The greatest number of words between any two Hallelujahs is four, and that only once : in every other instance, between one Hallelujah and another there are but two words. It is as though the soul gave utterance to its whole life and feeling in the one word, *Hallelujah!* The words, "Praise ye the Lord!" or "Praise Him!" "Praise Him!" "Praise Him!" are reiterated no fewer than twelve times in a short Psalm of six short verses.

III. *Indeed, the last three Psalms are a triad of wondrous praises, ascending from praise to higher praise, until it becomes "joy unspeakable and full of glory,"—exultation which knows no bounds. The joy overflows the soul, spreads throughout the universe, every creature is magnetised by it, and drawn into the chorus. Heaven is full of praise, the earth is full of praise, praises rise from under the earth, "every thing that hath breath" joins in the rapture. God is encompassed by a loving, praising creation. Man, the last in creation, but the first in song, knows not how to contain himself. He dances, he sings, he commands all the heavens, with all their angels, to help him, "beasts and all cattle, creeping things and flying fowl," must do likewise, even dragons must not be silent, and "all deeps" must yield contributions. He presses even dead things into his service, timbrels, trumpets, harps, organs, cymbals, high-sounding cymbals, if by any means, and by all means, he may give utterance to his love and joy.*

IV. *But these Psalms are the Psalms of God, and prophecies of good things to come. They are an anticipation of the end of all God's plans and purposes, when everything in man, and man of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, shall be comprehended in the love of God. Every man, even the lowest man, (who is scarcely man, and may rather be called "creature,") is an object of God's love, and*

is capable of loving Him in return. Sensual men, who are so by the constitution of their nature, need not be vicious men, and often are not vicious. With all their grossness, many of them have a conscience void of offence both towards God and men. With the fear of God before their eyes, and the love of God in their hearts, though brutish and ignorant, in their measure, they love and praise the same Holy, Holy, Holy God, whom angels praise in Heaven.

The God of Love, the Father of all, is no respecter of persons. Let His Psalms witness : Ye holy ones of My highest heavens, ye suns of My kingdom ; and ye fair and beautiful ones of lower heavens, ye moons of My kingdom ; ye faithful ones too of the earth, ye kings, who through the strength of My might in you, reign over the lusts and follies of your own hearts and of the world ; ye young men, ye who are valiant for the truth ; and ye maidens, ye who are comely and beautiful through My love and meekness in you ; ye old men, or you who are in honour and influence through My wisdom ; and ye children, or all you who are young and lovely through My simplicity ; and ye beasts, you whose goodness is that of nature, and not that of the second birth ; and ye flying fowl, or you whose intellectual soarings are always under the moon, and compassed about with clouds ; and ye dragons, or you poor down-trodden, prostrate, sensual creatures, who are incapable of appreciating anything above

the level of the senses ;—*Come all of you, receive My love, and join in My praise.*

Those who are a little above the lowest may despise the lowest, but He who is high above the highest despiseth none. Highest angels are not so far removed from the lowest tribes of the earth, as God is above highest angels. Indeed, we have seen the lowest and most brutish natures rendered not only harmless, but positively good and beautiful, through the power and charm of the love of Christ.

V. But *the regenerate undergo, in their own experience, all the changes and transitions represented in these Psalms.* They have their bright, sunny hours of heavenly joy, and they have their quiet, moon-light hours : sometimes favourable winds bear them briskly on, and they make good progress with little difficulty ; at other times they have their dead calms, and though they worry themselves and make great effort, they can make no way : they have their ardent, fiery states, and these are often succeeded by cold, sluggish conditions, as though dense vapours were enswathing the soul : now their affections are frost-bound, and then again comes a warm thaw : sometimes the dew of Divine influence rests peacefully upon them, and then succeeds the pitiless hail-storm of fierce trial : sometimes they lie down in green pastures, by still waters ; at other times they are out at sea, where deep calleth unto deep, and all the waves and the billows roll over them : some-

times their souls are like "mountains, that kiss high heaven;" and sometimes they walk through deep valleys of humiliation: sometimes they are like lofty trees stretching forth their arms towards the sky, full of leaf, and conscious of the breath of heaven, as it comes whispering and making soft music through their branches, but fearfully exposed withal to the tempest; and sometimes they are like the meek and lowly bush, which, though less noticeable and majestic than the tall tree-estate, is less exposed to the tempest, and preferred by God for the revelation of His Presence. In all these states, and all states whatsoever, God calls upon His children *to praise Him*, to believe in His unchangeability, to confide in His love, and never to doubt nor be afraid. Why should God be trusted less, or loved less, because we change? Our winter midnights should praise Him by meek silent submission: our summer noons may praise Him in another way, but not more perfectly. It is well to know that all our changes have their part to fulfil in the progress of our sanctification. The bitter experience of our own natures must needs be granted to us, that the more we discover of the depravity and deceitfulness of our hearts, the more we may humble ourselves: and the sweet experience of the love of God is given to us, that we may know Him better and love Him more. Even our lowest conditions of spiritual coldness and darkness, by generating within us intense self-loathing, praise the Lord. When we

wail under our bondage and corruption, — “O wretched man that I am !” the unfeigned worship of Divine Holiness is latent within the wailing. God interprets our self-hatred to mean His highest praise. “From the earth and all deeps” the Lord is praised.

Repentance honours the Holiness of God : faith links us with Christ, and engages on our behalf His mercy and His power, His wisdom and His righteousness : in prayer, we wait upon God for the supply of our wants, out of His riches in glory by Christ Jesus ; but in *love* God dwells and rests, and in His bosom love dwells and rests. The *servants* of God are honourable and useful, but the *friends* of God are blessed. The friends of God greatly love and value all His servants, but the servants of God often judge His friends hardly. The servants of God know very little of the perfect freedom which His friends have, both with Him and in their own spirits. The servants of God do not entirely approve of the freedom of His friends. In their opinion, the perfect love which casteth out fear is too easy and familiar. Again, the servants of God have no idea that His friends should be left to act in *freedom from love* : they think that their own measure and method of work, and their rigour of discipline, should be a law for all. Peter could not enter upon *his* path of service and leave John to *his*, without inquiring : “Lord, and what shall this man do ?”

The truth is, “he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.” It is granted to love to



have "boldness in the day of judgment;" for the boldness of love is only the boldness of a child, perfectly *at home*. "There is no fear in love." Joy and song are the fruit of love. The song of the holy flows forth from the joy of God within them, to the God of joy without them. All things flow to their source. There is substantial ground for the conception that Heaven is the house of "sweet voices uttering joy." It must be so, for it is the house of love. Music and song are love expressing itself in sweet sounds.

In singing, when you sing without effort, when you do not constrain your own voice, when the sweet sound of your affection rather flows from you than is made by you, when you allow the soul's deepest love to well forth in soft utterance;—what a strange pleasure you feel, far within, sometimes deep enough for tears, sometimes too deep.

VI. *If God inhabiteth the praises of Israel, this sweet, calm, holy delight is not unaccountable.* It is not poetry simply, it is the plain, sober truth, that a whole assembly praising God is "like a little Heaven below." A congregation of human hearts, agreeing together to sing forth their living human affections to the One object of their love, is always "the house of God and the gate of Heaven." Such a congregation powerfully attracts Heaven to itself, as like to like. With a diviner love, and greater unity in the Church, it might easily occur

again, that the joy would be too great, the glory too great, and the God of glory too fully present, for the ordinary service. Even as a flood carries away all sign-posts and barriers before it, and sweeps over all distinction of path and hedge, so would an unusual descent of the joy of God into His Church set at nought and suspend the mechanical order of the service, and bear away priest and people on the tide of one resistless impulse to praise and glorify God. Or, the Presence might be too overwhelming, utterance might be choked, and priest and people might have to wait in awe and silence for the passing over, or the withdrawment of the tide of glory. "It came to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord; and when they lifted up their voice with their trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying, For He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever: that *then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord; so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the Glory of the Lord had filled the house of God.*" Make the Church full of praise, and it will also be full of God. God and His praise cannot be apart. "O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel."

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VII. Unregenerate nature has its songs, and regenerate nature has its songs: *God inhabits the*

*praises of regenerate nature.* The Holy One must have a holy dwelling-place. Israel stands for the whole Church of first-born souls. Though souls are first born into nature, ("first, that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual,") they are not first-born souls until they are born of God. Nature as it now is, and man as he now is, are not what God first made them, but what they have become by manifold degenerations. Jacob must therefore prevail over nature, and take the kingdom of Heaven by divine violence, in order to become *Israel*,—a prince of God. Regeneration is necessary to put man back into the true first-born condition of the sons of God. By His first birth he inherits nature, and the wrath of God which is in nature; and he will never find entrance into the kingdom of God, except he be born again. Twice-born souls are "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; *that they should show forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvellous light.*"

VIII. *The Prince and Head of God's Israel is our Lord Jesus Christ, and His seed are the only genuine tribes of Israel.* Of all that have been born of woman, He alone has worthily and acceptably praised, and honoured, and glorified God. In the highest sense, the praises of Israel are His work. "The second man, the Lord from Heaven" excepted, every human creature, and the works

of every human creature, have dishonoured God. The Lord's whole work in our nature is the only just, true, and perfect glorification of God, which this world has ever witnessed. The fallen creation, (which by its evils and miseries has been a reproach to God for ages of ages,) has been made to culminate in Jesus Christ, and in Him has culminated in redemption, holiness, and praise for ever. The obedience of Jesus, the holy sorrows of Jesus, the condemnation of sin in Jesus, the self-sacrifice of our nature in Jesus, and the resurrection of the same in Him, without spot or blemish or any such thing :—these are the holy and acceptable praises which our Israel, on our behalf, has rendered to the Father. And the praises which God will inherit to all eternity are not the praises of the old creation, but the praises of all those who are created anew in Christ Jesus ; and whose righteousness, glory, and joy are in their Head, and only in them by derivation from His fulness. “In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord.”

IX. “*Groweth* :” the temple of temples *is growing*. Strictly speaking, there has been hitherto no “*holy temple*.” Heaven has not kept its first estate. The earth has not kept its first estate. The invisible and visible creations have both fallen. The “*holy temple*” is now *growing*. The Lord Himself is its foundation, for He has been made

flesh : the Lord is its topstone, for He hath glorified His flesh ; and the Lord is the spirit and the glory of the temple, for in Him dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead, and from Him the spirit and the glory of God inhabiteth and filleth the whole temple. This temple is the end and the glory of all the works of God. It shall not be defiled for ever, it shall not be moved for ever, its glory shall not fade for ever. The gates of Hell shall never prevail against it. It is one with Christ as Christ is one with God. It is the "House not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens."

X. *Imagine the universal temple of God.* The temple of which Christ is both the foundation and the crown, the spirit and the glory, is *the universal temple*. All previous, unfallen creations bring their glory and honour into it. All the angels who *did* keep their first estate see in the kingdom of Jesus the only "kingdom which *cannot be moved*." The legions of innocent and holy creatures are as eager as lost sinners to be incorporated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. Vast, and beyond all comprehension, is the temple of Eternity ; but it is still growing. All they who, before Christ, confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth, and died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off,—all these are in the kingdom and temple of Christ. All the redeemed, the fruit of all the centuries since the

Lord was received up into Heaven, are in His kingdom. And perhaps the whole of the material universe is the sphere of His redeeming operations. Imagine from all sources the accumulation down to the day of doom. Imagine the mighty gathering. Imagine the organisation of the whole body of Christ. Imagine one God, one Christ, one Spirit, and one Temple. Imagine the number of glorified human forms which will compose that Living Temple. Imagine every heart full of the vehemence of love, and every tongue burdened with praise. What a whirlpool of praise ! What a vortex of the love of God ! The Holy, Holy, Holy God, whom heaven, and the heaven of heavens, cannot contain, descends ever and evermore, and more and more, into the holy temple of His praise. And the whole temple, in a certain sense, "*groweth*" to eternity, for it becomes more and more receptive of God, and ascends and still ascends, through the indwelling Divine Might, to higher holiness, higher joy, higher praise, world without end.

HALLELUJAH ! HALLELUJAH ! AMEN !

*To all unhappy, dejected believers.* You want to know how it is that you are not happier,—how it is that others should have an assurance of faith, and a joy in God, to which you are utter strangers ? If you can receive it, here is your answer : You

rob God. *You are not a thanksgiving people.* You pray, pray, pray, but you are dumb at thanksgiving. How should *you* be happy? There is no Heaven either in this world, or the world to come, for people who do not praise God. If you do not enter into the spirit and worship of Heaven, how should the spirit and joy of Heaven enter into you? Selfishness makes long prayers, but love makes short prayers, that it may continue longer in praise. If the love of God were in you, you would be *constrained* to bless, and praise, and magnify the God of love.

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Do you know that merely righteous, solemn, praying people are scarcely in their place at the feast of the Lord? "The communion of the body and blood of Christ" is called "Eucharist,"—*Thanksgiving*. For the children of the Lord's Supper should be bowed down under burdens of praise,—lost in thanksgiving,—wonders of humblest, meekest praise rising in silence from their souls.

## BABES

### WORLD-TYPES OF HEAVENLY INNOCENCE

“O tender gem, and full of Heaven!  
Not in the twilight stars on high,  
Not in moist flowers at even  
See we our God so nigh.”

The Christian world is a circumference which has grown from the Apostles as a centre: the Apostles also were once a circumference of which a little child was the centre. Jesus took a little child and set him *in the midst of the Apostles*; nor was that enough, He took the child in His arms, and lifted him to His bosom. The Beautiful Presence hides itself more in babes than in men. It is marvellous in our eyes, that where there is neither physical might, nor rational might, *there* the God of all might should be so much the more. But so it is. “Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast Thou ordained *strength* because of Thine enemies, that Thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.”



I. *Perhaps parents owe quite as much to their babes as babes to their parents*:—perhaps they serve their parents more than their parents serve them. Parents bring the world to the help of their babes: babes bring Heaven to the help of their parents. Parents minister to their babes the food, clothing, and defence of nature: babes minister to their parents the love, simplicity, and protection of Heaven. It is supposed that the rational powers must be in exercise and self-will developed, before the holy and comforting Presence of God can be with our children. The truth rather is, that as rationality dawns, and self-will asserts itself, the sweet influences of Heaven and of the Lord remove farther off. Or, to speak more correctly, when the age of self-hood commences, the child is less receptive, and therefore not so good a channel for Divine influence, as before. If parents would note the effect upon themselves, their own experience would teach them that the sweet, peaceful, innocent, joyous influences from their babes are abated rather than increased as they attain to personality, own will, and reason. But apart from all experience, believers in the Bible ought to know that “the tree of the knowledge of good and evil” did not bring about, between young mankind and God, a nearer relation; but the very contrary.

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II. *It is no objection that babes are helpless, for to helpless things God is the more helpful.* Nor

is it any objection that they are *without thought*, for thought is only necessary to the intelligent apprehension of the Divine Presence, and by no means necessary to the Divine Presence. Consider that the Shechinah, or Presence of JEHOVAH, was more strictly and fully with the carved Cherubim and the Ark, than with the men of Israel. Dead things have no living wills to separate the Holy Presence from them. Moses finds the Awful Glory so much more in the bush of the desert than in himself, that he must needs take off his shoes and stand afar off. A voice out of the midst of that Glory had said to him: "*Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from thy feet.*" And Moses stood silent and confounded before the Glory that could be in a bush, but could not be so fully in him. The bush was only a bush, and had no other life in it than the meek, passive vegetable life, but Moses had in him the life of a fallen, degenerate man. And if Moses had not been the meekest man in the world, he never could have been admitted, as he was, to intimate conference with God. But it is written that even Moses "*hid his face*" from the Presence that was in the bush, "*for he was afraid to look upon God.*" There are persons who have spiritual discernment enough to perceive whither this train of thought (touching the Divine Presence with babes, and even with things without life) tends, and what it involves; but, seeing that men are dull of hearing, and even the faith of the Church is become carnal, the mysteries of the

kingdom use silence much, but speech, "here a *little* and there a *little*." To men of uncircumcised ears, the Word speaks "with stammering lips and a strange tongue." Whoso hath ears to hear, shall hear.

The idea that God cannot regenerate and sanctify children before thought and reason are in exercise, is a great sign of the carnality of faith, and a great delusion. It ought rather to be believed that, *if the parents are in Christ*, there is not only an hereditary depravity, but also an hereditary grace of God, in the children. If, before the Incarnation, Samuel, Jeremiah, John the Baptist, and others, were sanctified from conception, and born a holy seed, we may certainly assume, since the Lord was made flesh, that the incipient germ of regeneration is present in children born of the members of His body. St. Paul affirms that, if only one of the parents is in Christ, there is a transmission of the spirit of holiness. Can the Spirit of God more easily operate upon the human spirit through its reason, than upon the same spirit prior to the age of reason? The very reverse. Without a doubt, in many a child, not yet born into the world, "the seed of the woman" has commenced its work of bruising "the seed of the serpent." And how much more this would be the case if marriage and all its mysterious intercourse were sanctified to the Lord. But if parents have not faith in the regenerating mercies of God towards their babes, what wonder that these mighty works of God are restrained.

III. *The man Christ Jesus was always as a babe before God* ; He is called, therefore, the "*Holy Child, Jesus.*" He declared that His will was the Father's will in Him, and that neither His words nor works were His own, but the Father's who sent Him. He was the beautifully, the perfectly passive man, in whom and by whom God was active, and did all His pleasure. In Him there was the hiding of Divine Power. He could deliver Himself, but He would not. Had He expressed His will that it should be so, more than twelve legions of angels would have waited upon Him, but He would not. He abandoned Himself to the *helplessness* of a babe, that nothing in Him might be done by the assumed humanity, but everything by God. His enemies did to Him whatever they would, for they found no resistance in Him. He would lie dead in the grave, and, if ever He be raised up, God must raise Him. God hides Himself in passivity. "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty things." The creature's own strength and self-activity are hindrances to Divine operations. "To them who have no might He increaseth strength." The work which God does by man's own activity is less perfect than the work which He accomplishes through helplessness. In works of the first kind there is more of man : in works of the latter kind there is less of man, but more of God. Yet the former are thought by men to be exclusively *works*, and the latter to be no works. Works must

appeal to the outer eyes, or the outer ears, to go for works with men. All highest works, therefore, which are fulfilled "without observation," are lost upon them. The fact is, men not only appreciate their own works better than God's works, but their own way of working rather than God's way.

IV. *We witness both for the works of God, and for the secret method of His working.* God can do works through babes, which He cannot do through their parents. The parents must be far more angelic creatures than parents generally are, if the influence which comes to them through their babes is not more heavenly than the influence which reaches the babes through them. The sensual reason, confirmed by the *appearance* of things, will contend that God has ordained strength to be with the parents; but the Divine Word and faith maintain that God has ordained a superior strength to be with babes. God is able to operate His strength through babes and sucklings, to the confounding of His enemies, and the ghostly enemies of the parents. He can still the enemy and avenger better through babes than through men. The enemy finds much in men that he can enlist on his side, against the operation of the Divine strength. The dear babes know nothing, do nothing, and therefore God can use them the more. Neither do they, by self-reflection, rob God of His glory, as men do. Men are apt to take to themselves the credit and the glory of the

work which God does by them: not so babes. Wherefore wonderful works are done through babyhood.

V. When the Redeemer quoted that remarkable passage from the eighth Psalm to which we have already made allusion, He interpreted it to mean that God "*perfects His praise*" by the *instrumentality of babes and sucklings*. The reason is obvious: upgrown persons attribute much to their own wisdom and ability; but babes are innocent and unreasoning channels of the Divine Power. How dreadfully hurabbling it must be to evil spirits to be rebuked and awed off from a house, or family, through the babes that are in it. How galling and maddening it must be to "the enemy and avenger," that the power of God should "still" him, and render him incapable, through the presence of a babe. Wonderful that God should "perfect His praise" by those who are supposed to have no capacity for His praise. But as surely as Jesus became a babe for the sake of all babes, so surely is Jesus with us in our babes. When we, by our unbelief and hardness of heart, by our evil tempers and our stubborn wills, are far from Him and incapable of His blessing, He can take our babes in His arms and bless them. With them innocence is in the ascendant, and the depravity which they inherit from their parents is not yet active. Where depravity is not active, there God is active. Where God is active, Hell stands no

chance. Saul found that the evil spirit was subdued, and drawn from him, by the sweet tones which breathed from the harp, when the son of Jesse was the player. When an evil spirit has the mastery over you, sit down before a babe, look into its eyes, brood over its features, be passive,—yield to the influences which steal over you, and see whether God does not “still the enemy and the avenger” in you.

VI. *Is it then a loss to a house to have no babe in it?* It is a loss. Those only who have had a babe know what the loss is. Most married persons also who have never had a babe feel that their privation is great. Affirm the love of children to be instinct if you like: instincts are unsuspecting signs of great truths. A powerful instinct is a powerful truth expressing itself through the affections, rather than through the intelligence. You *may* not *know* that babes are comparatively holy ground, and that the Blessed Presence is peculiarly with them, but the strong and tender affections which stir in your bosom towards them, and the innocence and cheerfulness of feeling which are excited in you whenever you yield to their influence, are an unknowing acknowledgment that the grace and sweetness of the Holy One are come nigh unto you. Jesus *knew* that there was more of Heaven in the unthinking playfulness of little children than in all the solemnities of learned scribes and

Pharisees; and you often *feel* the same, without tracing the feeling to its ground and law.

VII. *If you have not babes, you have the more need to be babes yourselves*, in order to keep the fountain of your heart from drying up. If you have babes, the innocent and joyous affections of Heaven will play about you through them; but if through penitence, through meekness, through simplicity and holy love, you are yourselves as babes before God, the innocent and joyous affections of Heaven will play through your own souls. By secret means and ministries God can more than supply the lack of children. Have not all the holy angels the simplicity and the innocence of babes? and “are they not all ministering spirits”? They have the charge of all godly houses in the world. Through them God overshadows and guards the heirs of salvation, and communicates secret help and comfort to every house, of those who love Him and do His will.

VIII. All truly godly persons, *believers in Jesus, are aiming to become, intelligently and with purpose, what babes are without intelligence and purpose.* Meekness, gentleness, simplicity, trust, and contentment (qualities of angels and babes), they long after and cultivate: pride, deceit, conceit, distrust, and discontent (qualities of men and women), they rebuke and loathe, and labour to subdue and



exterminate. And the more these former qualities increase and abound, so much the more do they enjoy of the Divine Presence in these qualities. As the host of baby-angels do always behold the face of their Father who is in heaven, so is heaven nearest to those who excel most in the meek and passive baby-virtues.

IX. We have spoken of *the Divine Strength*, which hides itself in babes; *ought we not also to speak of the accession of love, which is so well known to come with every babe?* The babe is no sooner in the house than father and mother, and brother and sister, are conscious of an increase of love. The proverb is in every nurse's mouth: "*They bring love with them.*" Not that I imagine it is understood in any other sense, than that they awaken love in the hearts of those who have to do with them. But the truth is, they do that, and much more than that: they stir the fountain of our tenderest affections, because they "*bring love.*" Why, from first to last, they are creations of love. They are embodiments of love, of human and of Divine love. There must be therefore about them an atmosphere of softest human and of meekest heavenly love. Minerals bring their atmospheres with them, so do violets and honeysuckles: how much more when heaven and earth, time and eternity, fall into the lap, in the shape of nursing-angels. A new process of tendering, mellowing,

and beautifying, in the souls of the parents dates from the birth of every babe. God is greatly with our babes, and with us through them. They are our highest world-types of angelic innocence.

X. *All the possibilities of Heaven and Eternity are hidden in a child.* Meekly they sleep in the unsuspecting babe, as the future bloom sleeps in the flower-root. If all things of heaven and God were not mysteriously present, as latent possibilities, in the human babe, THE WORD, in which all things are, could not have assumed that form. Babes are angels, whose faces are turned outwards, that we, artful, designing, discontented, covetous men and women, may see how sweet, innocent, trusting, peaceful, the creatures of the holy world are. Angels are babes, whose faces are turned inwards, so that they see not this base world, but the holy world, and look upon the face of the All Holy One, without fear. The souls of babes, escaped from their fleshly envelope, learn the holy and innocent life of heaven more readily than they would learn in this world the crafty, sinful life.

*"Suffer little children to come unto Me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven."*

## AIDS TO THOUGHT

"It is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. It is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into Hell fire." The imperfections of some people are "*better for them*" than the perfections of others. There are those who, with their imperfections, "*enter into life*": there are others who, in their wholeness and perfection, go down to Hell. "It is better" to be an imperfect regenerate man, than to be a perfect natural man. "It is better" to be an imperfect member of *Christ's body*, than to be a perfect man of the world. "It is better for thee" to be a poor, blind, ignorant, one-sided, maimed man, *given up to God*, than to be the most enlightened, generous, handsome, well-developed man in *self-will*.

Naturally speaking, there are far handsomer, nobler persons in the service of the world, the flesh, and the devil, than in the service of God. "Not many noble," indeed! *As a general rule*, the noblest-formed creatures as to their bodies, and the

noblest. as to their souls, and the noblest as to wealth and circumstances, you will not find in the kingdom of Christ. But you may find many half-bred, many ill-bred, many deformed, and many sick and infirm persons, devoted to God, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath prepared for them that love Him. "Not many noble," but "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are."

Have you not often wondered that persons, whose presence rather annoys and oppresses you than comforts you, should yet very much covet your presence? They are negative and you are positive. It is very pleasant to them to be magnetised by your buoyancy and cheerfulness, but it is not so pleasant to you to lose so much and to receive nothing in return. Or, what is worse, perhaps fretful, irritable people draw largely upon *your comfort*, and play forth upon you *their misery* in return. They are double gainers, they gain both by what they lose and what they receive: you are double losers, you lose both by what you receive and what you give. But it is more blessed to give than to receive. And blessed

are they who give freely, hoping for nothing again. Highest of all is the Christ-life, which breathes forth its own sweetness, and willingly carries the griefs and sorrows of others.

Man is the grand conjunction. World, Hell, Heaven are in him, in one mass. We say he is on Earth, and so he is ; but is he not also in Hell, and in Heaven, and in God ? Have not the World, Hell, Heaven and God, each, a ground in him ? Does not the world claim him ? does not Hell claim him ? does not Heaven claim him ? does not God claim him ? The world appeals to his senses ; Hell appeals to his self-love and to the reason which is subordinate to his self-love ; Heaven and God make their appeal to his holier affections, and to his deeper understanding.

The world, the devil, and the natural mind of man are the mighty three, which apologise for his degeneracy, and ceaselessly labour to hold him in it : Heaven, the Lord, and his conscience are the mightier three, which plead for his regeneration, and ceaselessly strive to conduct him through it. As neither the mighty, nor the mightier, three can move or lead man, except by the consent of his own will, it often happens, through the favour and partiality of his will, that the mighty three prevail over the mightier. Man himself decides whether the lower or the higher powers shall carry him away.

As the atmosphere, laden with rejected gases, comes forth from the lungs, and mingles with the common air; so do the thoughts and affections of our spiritual nature go forth to be inbreathed again by other souls. On this ground, Jesus taught that when the Holy Spirit dwells in a man, streams of holy influence flow forth from that man's spirit. If a frail flower breathes sweetness into the general air, how much more a holy *man*! If a cesspool emits a pestiferous influence, how much more a bad *man*! Is not every man an open gate into the world, either for Heaven or Hell?

## THE RECONCILIATION OF ALL THINGS

You remember that in the mystic sheet, which St. Peter saw let down from Heaven, there "were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air"; and that Peter, calling them "common and unclean," was rebuked, and requested no more to call common or unclean what God had cleansed. Thrice over he was charged: "*What God hath cleansed, call not thou common.*" This being done, the vessel, with its beasts, wild beasts, reptiles, and fowls, was received up again into Heaven. Observe, they were let down from Heaven, they returned to Heaven.

St. Peter was thus taught that the Incarnation involved more, and had effected more, than had ever entered into his heart. Forasmuch as the Lord was made flesh, all flesh is, in the Divine purpose, purified, yea, and it shall be purified. In the sanctification and the glorification of the Lord's flesh, the unity and the holiness of all flesh are come before God, as an offering acceptable and well-pleasing in His sight. Things that were common and unclean before are to be regarded

(on the ground of the Lord's coming in the flesh, and their relation to His flesh) as "*cleansed.*" That which in nature is division and distraction, in the Lord's body is unity and peace. For if Adam, as the head of the world, represented in himself all creatures, and from instincts and intuitions in himself gave names to all creatures, how much more must the Lord's glorified flesh cover and comprehend the strange diversity, under which flesh subsists in the whole creation. Does it not follow also of necessity, that the Lord's Body, since it is become the temple in which dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead, must represent the whole of nature? Must not the Body which all the Divine fulness can inhabit, include in itself the principles and correlatives of *all things*? The Lord Jesus Christ, being related to all flesh, is reigning with "all power," as the Reconciler, over all flesh. All the perverse, discordant, partial and monstrous manifestations in nature are comprised under one Divine Head, in order to the restitution of all things to order, harmony, peace, and beauty.

II. "Out of the stem of Jesse" (out of the corrupt, perishing trunk of degenerate humanity) "there shall come forth a rod, and a Branch shall grow out of His roots." • *Here is the little child again.* "Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Behold THE MAN whose name is THE BRANCH; and He shall grow up out of His place, and He shall build



the temple of the Lord." Out of the heterogeneous, uncouth materials of fallen nature He shall educe a new creation, which shall be holiness to the Lord. "Even He shall build the temple of the Lord ; and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne ; and He shall be a priest (a Reconciler) upon His throne : *and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.*" Peace throughout the house of the universe, which is the house of God, is decreed ; the counsel, scheme, or project of peace is complete, and fully adequate : the Eternal Father by the Son, and the Son by the Eternal Father, will surely bring, it about. Or, in the words of another prophet : "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given : and the government shall be upon His shoulder : and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, *the Prince of Peace.*" On one side of His nature He "groweth up out of His place" in the Godhead, and on the other side of His nature He springeth from the root of David. "He shall sit and rule upon His throne," until He has brought in and established universal order and peace. In the Prince Himself, as the first-fruits, it is already fulfilled and established: He will fulfil and establish the same in the whole creation, and then present it to the Father, "holy and without blemish."

III. Wonderful Child ! His Name shall be called "God, with us !" *Under His reign, creatures*

*and elements, passions and principles long divided and at strife, shall become one again.*

“ The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb ;  
And the leopard shall lie down with the kid ;  
And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together ;  
*And a little child shall lead them.*  
And the cow and the bear shall feed together ;  
Their young ones shall lie down together ;  
And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.  
And the suckling shall play on the hole of the asp ;  
And the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice’ den.  
*They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My Holy mountain.”*

There is much to subdue ; there is very little to scorn, or to disown. Much that is unseemly only requires to be put in its place, in order to be seemly. The devil’s work is destruction, God’s work is reconciliation. Alienation and antipathy are not essential to the creatures ; all creatures are of God, and under the reign of His Holy Child they are all capable of being restored to harmony. What we call evil and hurtful are often only evil and hurtful, so long as they are ungoverned, or misgoverned : under wise and competent control they would become both good and useful. The great want is *government*, holy, loving, adequate government ; operating not simply from without, but operating by the law of a competent spirit and presence from within. Such a government is provided, and is sitting in the throne of God in the person of Jesus. His law is ceaselessly going forth,

as a universal spirit of life, to the ends of the earth, and nothing is hid from the energy thereof. He will reign, and the law of His life will continue to operate until He has brought every adverse power and principle into subjection to Himself. In due time the spirit of "the little child" of God, namely, the Divine meekness and love, will supplant the angry, fierce, terrible spirit of nature.

In the present state of things, the wolf tears the lamb, the leopard tears the kid, the lion rends and devours the calf, the bear ravages the gentle cow. Wild and ferocious beasts! they want something of which they are deficient. They are not well-balanced. Nature has been too sparing in her supply of the meek and gentle qualities. *We* doom them to destruction, in order that our lambs, kids, calves, and little children may be safe and free from alarm. But here, in this prophetic picture, they are all in perfect peace, lying down together, feeding together; without a tendency on the part of the stronger to hurt the weaker, or on the part of the weaker to flee from the stronger. Perhaps, under the reign of the Divine Innocence, nature will not be able to perpetuate her violent and destructive properties. As the reign of the Divine Child spreads, and His affections are more fully and generally embodied in the human race, in that proportion the malignancy of nature may abate. Not that it is my purpose to decide whether, or not, this Divine parable is to have a literal fulfilment.

IV. *To me there is but one subject in the Bible, and that is man.* The Bible is human. Strictly speaking, Nature too is human. God has in creation but one creature who can rebel against His authority, and but one creature therefore who can do His will. Man is the subject of the Divine government. If *he* is well ruled and obedient, all things are well ruled and obedient. If he falls into misrule, all things fall into misrule. So long as he keeps his place under God, all things keep their place under him. If he becomes unfaithful to God, all things become unfaithful to him. If he loses his integrity, nature cannot keep her integrity. If he is restored to order, nature cannot abide in disorder.

I confess I see no difficulty in applying the great reconciliation of God to all creatures, and to all elements. Indeed, if it be once fulfilled in man, I not only see no difficulty in its being fulfilled throughout nature, but I do not believe that enmity and strife could have place in nature, if they ceased to have place in man. As man is, such is nature. Nature is his looking-glass.

The great difficulty is man; after him, all things will fall into order. But since the Lord has become Man, no man is to be despaired of. Even wolfine and ursine men, leonine and swinish men, can be restored to unity and beauty. The head of the difficulty is accomplished:—after a conflict of unknown agony and endurance, the Divine Nature and

human nature are perfectly reconciled, in the Son of God. Let the reconciliation which is fulfilled in Him be fulfilled in man, and let Christ the Lord be in man and man in Christ the Lord, even as God is in Christ and Christ in God; and there will be no longer hostility among the creatures, nor tumult in the elements.

V. *The thing to which I invite especial attention is this:* Here all these creatures are,—wolves and lambs, leopards and kids, bears and cows, lions and calves,—in beautiful subjection to the little child; and because in subjection to the Divine Man-child, they are at peace with each other. To give it a human application,—let all things in man be under the Divine, loving, gentle authority of Jesus, and they will all be reconciled to each other. Those human passions and instincts, of which wolves, leopards, lions, bears, and serpents are the signs and representatives, when under subjection to the Holy Child, no longer do violence to the meek and loving affections, but all dwell together in one human soul, in unity.

This Divine unity, and not destruction, is God's end: it is therefore said to obtain "*on the mountain of the Lord.*" It does not obtain in nature, nor on the great plain of man's doings and operations. Man's ways are not God's ways. God's method is the preservation of all and the sanctification of all, by one all-comprehending reconciliation. God

accepts not man's divisions, but gathers together again what man has cast away. On God's mountain-top (the final condition to which He is bringing things), the creatures which used to hurt and destroy are still present; but they are under rule, and all dwelling together in sympathy and love. "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain." This is very different from saying, "They shall not be there." They shall be there, but they shall not hurt, nor have any disposition to hurt. Remember, St. Peter's "heavenly vision" *did* include "wild beasts." In Saul of Tarsus we see the furious lion, fiery leopard, and the ravening wolf, but in Paul the servant of our Lord Jesus Christ, the wolf, with all his eagerness still in him, is dwelling with the lamb, the leopard, with no abatement of his fiery nature, is lying down with the kid, and the lion, with his power and daring undiminished, is sharing one common lot with the calf and the fatling. The wild forces of nature, and the destructive tendencies of animal instinct and rapacity, only want to be inspired, overmastered, and clothed upon with Divine Innocence and Love, in order to become not only harmless, but positively gracious and admirable. Only suppose the lamb-nature to be thoroughly developed in the wolf, and the kid-nature to be thoroughly developed in the leopard, and the calf-nature to be thoroughly developed in the lion; and these creatures would be much more noble than mere lambs, kids, and calves. They would be lambs,

kids, and calves with a superior power, majesty, and presence in them.

There are men in whom great force of nature, daring, determination and invincibility of will are dominant; and there are others who have no such qualities, but who are comparatively innocent, timid, meek, and submissive. When men of the former class submit to the authority of "the little child" in Jesus, and put on His Divine goodness and sweetness, they not only become as meek and innocent as the men of the latter class, but they have withal might, authority, and kingliness of character, which the naturally meek and amiable know nothing about. The leopards, wolves, bears, and lions, which Jesus masters and leads, will finally exhibit far more of the lamb in them than those who were lambs by their first birth and the spirit of nature. There are powerful and daring spirits, who for meekness will bear comparison with lambs, but who, for hard service, are of more value than many lambs. And there are wise serpents who are as harmless as doves, and far more useful than they.

There is little virtue in lambs being lambs, in kids being kids, and in doves being doves; but when leopards are innocent as lambs, and wolves gentle as kids, and serpents harmless as doves, they show forth immense virtue. I mean, when fiery, impetuous, cunning men submit to the dominion of "the little child," they exhibit the power and glory of Divine grace, and proclaim the praises of God, as creatures

naturally meek and amiable can never do. Indeed, the grace of nature is not grace, the goodness of nature is not goodness, the meekness is not meekness. The lamb is spiteful, the calf has horns in the bud, the dove is crafty. There is no true lamb, except in Jesus; there is no genuine dove, except His Spirit. And it is as easy for Him to reconcile unto Himself wild and terrible people as the most amiable.

VI. Whatever his nature and qualities are, *let no one look for wholeness or salvation unless he is under "the little child" Jesus.* He can make bears and lions whole, and lambs and kids must receive their wholeness from Him, or they will find that their innocence is of the earthly, and far enough from the heavenly sort. He can make serpents harmless, and doves will not pass for doves in His kingdom without regeneration and the supply of His Spirit. He can subdue, change, and glorify the unlikeliest of the unlikely. "He is able to save unto the uttermost." "All things are possible with God." Be wise now, therefore, ye self-ruling kings; be instructed, ye self-judging judges of the earth. Kiss the Son: He will make you kings indeed, judges indeed. Submit all the powers, passions, and instincts of your nature to His government and guidance: you will not find Him a destroyer, but a Reconciler and a Saviour. He will fulfil in your own experience all the wonders of prophecy. The wild beasts and



the tame beasts shall lie down together in you. His Spirit will convert the deep and manifold variance that is in you into harmony. Whatever be your defects, He will complete your nature. He will clothe you with "the perfection of beauty." And the perfection of beauty which *enrobes you* will only be the evidence of the perfect work which He has wrought in you.

VII. If you can receive it, learn that *there are the same powers in Heaven as in Hell*. In no sense has Hell any advantage over Heaven. Hell is dreadfully *deficient*. Hell is horrible *disorder*. Hell piteously cries for, and at the same time madly fights against, reconciliation. All the creatures, powers, and passions of Heaven are in subjection to the little child, the Divine innocence and simplicity ; while all creatures, powers, and passions in Hell are in disharmonising, struggling, warring, convulsive independence. The devil was a murderer from the beginning. Before the foundation of the world, he slew in himself the lamb and the dove, and ever since has been going about, with the subtlety of a serpent and the rage of a lion, to deceive and to devour. But there is a lion in Jesus more than a match for the roaring lion ; and the Old Serpent, the devil, is neither so old nor so wise as the serpent of eternity in Jesus. From the beginning to this hour the subtlety of the devil has always been outwitted by the secret art of Divine Wisdom.

As is the devil, such are all they who are under him. Their independence is the most galling, restless, tormenting dependence. Their sharpest cunning is most stupid folly. As Jesus is, such are all they who are under Him. Their dependence is the most holy, blessed, peaceful, playful liberty. Their artless simplicity is consummate wisdom. "The little child" will, in the end, subject to His pleasure the wildest of beasts and the most venomous of serpents; in a word, "all the power of the enemy."

VIII. If man abides in self-will and independence, he becomes a little hell of disorder, strife, and misery, and finally goes "to his own place," to be filled with his own ways. His self-will and independence will be humbled and scourged by the self-will and independence of others; the disorder, the strife, and the misery in him will be aggravated and punished by the disorder, strife, and misery around him.

The man who sacrifices his self-will and independence to Jesus, becomes a little heaven of love, order, and peace. His nature becomes a whole circle of homogeneous energies, virtues, and affections; and he also goes to his own place, and adds the little heaven of his own redeemed nature to the great Heaven of God. Likewise, the great Heaven of God will contribute to all Eternity to the personal heaven of each and every inhabitant.

## AIDS TO THOUGHT

THE Creator is faithful. He abides by His creation, neither deserting nor repudiating it. Though nature has become a madhouse of fierce passions and deadly strife, His devotion to it knows no abatement. He will not fail nor be discouraged until He has put down all evil, and established righteousness, even "everlasting righteousness." "A *faithful* Creator" involves the idea of a tender Redeemer.

"The Heavens declare the glory of God." But "there is no speech nor language, their voice is not heard." Their preaching is too great for utterance. As if some most wondrous, most Godlike creature were ever standing before us, with his finger everlastingly upon his lip, as though he had much to say, but could not find expression,—always looking upon us, always shedding sweet influences upon us, without a motion or a sound. Lift up your eyes and behold the meek stars, for they are God's preachers, preaching to all generations, but silently,

that by missing the ear they may the better speak to the soul and spirit.

“To me the thought of death is terrible,  
Having such hold on life. To thee it is not  
So much even as the lifting of a latch;—  
Only a step into the open air  
Out of a tent already luminous  
With Light that shines through its transparent walls

The mediate and the immediate works of God should be carefully distinguished. The creation of God out of gross materials and corrupt elements is very different from a creation immediately from Himself. God grows our corn; but superior corn from good seed, by good farmers and in good soil, and inferior corn from bad seed, by bad farmers and in bad soil. God creates man to this day, out a very degenerate man through degenerate ancestors. The renewal of man in the likeness and image of God is an after-work, in which God and man co-operate. In creating man anew, the willing and the doing of God are effective through man's willing and doing, and the willing and doing of man are only effective towards his regeneration when they are grounded in the willing and doing of God, in him.

It is as much of Divine equity as mercy, that man, who had not the choice of his nature at first, should have the opportunity of choosing the substance, form, and character *of his endless being*. Man may be inspired and subenced from Heaven or from Hell. He may become a heavenly man, or a man earthly, sensual, and devilish, according to the direction in which he turns his will. Many men give themselves up to be formed for eternity by the world, the flesh, and the devil: some men yield themselves up to the holy, regenerative influences of God in Christ, and thus become, in the strictest sense, "*the children of God*." Nothing finally has place in any man but that which he has himself chosen and adopted.

If man were a bar of steel, or as a bar of steel between two magnets, every man would become wise and good, holy and happy. For God is an infinitely attracting, assimilating magnet; and if man were not an actual person, with a ~~distinct~~ individual will, he would be drawn irresistibly to God, and inevitably changed into the same image.

## THE EVERYWHERE-PRESENT CHRIST

THE breadth of Christ's actual operations is one thing: the boundaries within which different men conceive of His operations is another. The world is full of spiritual prisons: most men make choice of some one, and incarcerate their souls for life. They neither think nor love beyond the limits of their prison. The mischief does not end here: having shut themselves up, they shut up also the Lord and Saviour of all souls. They never imagine Christ transgressing *their* limits. If He should make light of their boundary, and extend His operations and methods beyond their line, He would cease to be *their* Christ. Without hesitation, they would assail Him with contradiction, reproach Him with "latitudinarianism," and charge Him with having "cast away His moorings." There are souls who are afraid of nothing so much as of breadth and liberty.\* Unbelief and hardness of heart, worldliness and selfishness, are very small sins, compared with charity and simplicity, comprehensiveness and liberty. You may have the

former sins and pass for good Christians: if you cultivate the latter qualities you will be suspected.

II. "If any man say to you, *Lo ! Christ is here,*" in this prison; "or, *Lo ! He is there,*" in that prison, "*believe him not.*" Thousands do say so, and tens of thousands believe them. But whatever men say, *Christ is not imprisoned*; and His words, to this day, call upon us to resist any and every party-Christ. If any man say to you, "Christ is in the Catholic Church and not in the Protestant," take no notice of that man, "*believe him not.*" Or, if any man say to you, "Christ is in the Protestant Church and not in the Catholic," take no notice of him, "*believe him not.*" If any man say to you, "Christ is in Christendom and not in Heathendom," take no notice of him, "*believe him not.*" Let him be to you as one who brays, and go thou and seek the true Christ elsewhere. Those who clamour most confidently about Him have the least of His Spirit. For it is written, "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street." He shall come rather as a breath of life, and "without observation," to all flesh. All who seek Him shall find Him, and of many who seek Him not He will be found; for He seeketh them. Let the man who circumscribes the sphere of Christ's operations be an offence to you. Settle it in your mind, that whoever separates Him from the whole human race is not yet well instructed in the great mystery of godliness.

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“The Christ of God” is far from being fully revealed in Europe; and the idolatry of India cannot completely hide Him. No religion is so bad that it can wholly exclude Him: no religion is so good that it wholly includes Him.

“There is no error so crooked, but it hath in it some lines of truth:

Nor is any poison so deadly, that it serveth not some wholesome use.

O man, little hast thou learnt of truth in things most true,

How, therefore, shall thy blindness wot of truth in things most false?

Even the panoply of error is but a distortion of the truth.”

The purest Christianity upon earth is not pure enough to represent the Holiness of Christ: all the religions in the world are not broad enough for His breadth. He is “the light of the world,” He is the light of all worlds visible and invisible. He is the same Almighty Truth, or Only-Begotten of the Father, to-day, yesterday, and for ever. Where no religion, as a doctrinal system, is either professed or known, you will find His Presence. Where there is knowledge there must be life; but no one will affirm that there cannot be life without knowledge. Even so Christ is both where He is known, and also where He is not known. You may call the tainted atmosphere of your room, or of your neighbourhood, *your* atmosphere, or *our*



atmosphere if you like; but the atmosphere of God embraces the whole world. And your partial, imperfect view of Christ may be the Christ of your mind; but "*the Christ of God*" enlighteneth, more or less, *every man* that cometh into the world, and the manifestation of His Spirit is given to *every man* to profit withal. Christians are apt to limit Christ, much in the same way as the Jews "limited the Holy One of Israel." Paul had to inquire: "Is God the God of the Jews only? Is He not also of the Gentiles?" The question for consideration in our day is analogous: Is our Lord Jesus Christ the Christ of Christians only? is He not also of all nations?

In the Christ of God are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge:—not only the treasures of wisdom and knowledge which Christians have, but also the treasures of wisdom and knowledge which the heathen have. In one locality, these treasures may be associated with less corruption, and in another, be mingled and confounded with mountains of rubbish: the adulteration, whether greater or less, is of man, but the Divine treasure in either case is of Christ. All the essentials of religion, apart from any of the forms of speech and worship which are called Christianity, meet and centre in Christ. He is the Everywhere-present Plenipotentiary of the universal Father. He is God, the Son. He is the soul of universal religion. His Life is omnipresent life, and His omnipresent life is the light of men.

The writings of the New Testament are a Divine Testimony concerning Christ, but the testimony is not Christ. We owe our knowledge of Christ to our holy books of testimony, but we must not confound Christ and our knowledge of Christ. Gravitation, as a law of the universe, operates where no knowledge of gravitation exists. Not that there is a strict analogy between the universal presence of Christ and the law of gravitation; for Christ is *a spiritual power*; therefore, *to know Him* and *to love Him* are most important, as conditions for His operation. And for this reason He has commanded the word of His Gospel to be carried into all the world and preached to every creature. But Christ, as a presence, as a motion in the soul, as a spirit of grace, is already present with every creature; and this ought to be a great encouragement to all servants of the gospel, that they are not sent to reveal to men a Redeemer who is afar off, but the Redeemer who is with them and in them. Let the missionary everywhere tell the heathen this, that there is "One among them whom they know not," and that he is come to make Him known to them;—even the holy, friendly, helping Presence which they have all felt moving and working in their dark souls.

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III. *Let us be free-men of the Living Christ of God, but not slaves of the word Christ.* The word Christ is not Christ. And those who have mouthed

Him most, with "Lord, Lord," ought not to be too confident that *they* shall enter into life, but that poor dark creatures, from the ends of the earth, who have called upon the same gracious and merciful Presence, "ignorantly," under some heathenish name, will go away into outer darkness. I have heard it said, "That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness." It would seem that there are many under the true religion who are *not* under Christ, and some under false religions who *are* under Him.

Christ is the Presence of God with the human race, from the beginning to the end of the world. His delights always were, and always will be, with the sons of men. Christ is the goodwill of God, ceaselessly operating for the good of every creature. Otherwise, how could men be told not to look hither or thither for Christ? Moses preached Christ unto the people in these words, and St. Paul in the same words: "The Word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it." Yes, where the monosyllable Christ is not, there THE WORD is, which was in the beginning with God, and was God; and it is this universal Living Word which is the Christ of God. He is the unconfined and the unconfined "Spirit of Truth." The many

false Christs which the Lord said would arise in His name, and deceive many, may be known by this, among other things,—they are all partial in their operations, and confined to particular localities.

IV. To this day *multitudes of Christians know Jesus in no other way than “after the flesh.”* Every believer, preacher, and theologian, whose whole knowledge of Him is drawn from the history of His life upon earth,—these only know Christ “after the flesh.” The poet, who piously, lovingly, and languishingly dwells upon His charms, His words, His miracles, His sufferings, knows Him only “after the flesh.” The Christian artist, who admires Him as the ideal man, who strives to imagine the beauty and grace, the dignity and softness of His Countenance, knows Him only “after the flesh.” All these perpetuate His humiliation, they only know Him in the form of a servant, making Himself of no reputation, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and humbling Himself to death, even the death of the Cross. The unhappy mistake of the rationalist wholly arises from the fact that Christ has once for our sakes limited and humbled Himself by coming in the flesh. His humiliation has so strongly attracted the thought and faith of mankind, that great numbers have lost sight of the omnipresence of His Divinity.

According to St. Paul, to know Christ only according to His worldly manifestation is a Jewish

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method of apprehending Him. Christians have known Him after the flesh, he says; but they renounce their first, carnal view of Him, in favour of a higher conception. The well-taught Christian outgrows his first, crude, imperfect knowledge of his Lord, and regards Him as "Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."

Christ is in all His redeemed, as the soul of their soul, the life of their life. He is the pitying heart and the helping hand of God with every needy, praying spirit in the world. He is the living, secret, efficient Gospel and Word of God, that is gone forth through all the earth. He is the sweet light of the knowledge of God that breaks in upon every penitent heart. He is the invisible bond of unity between all the scattered members of His body. He is far above all Heavens; He fills all things. He is not only with those who believe in Him and love Him, but also with those who neither believe in Him nor love Him,—to restrain them or to wound them, to enlighten them or to melt them, that He may be to them also *Jesus, their Saviour*. "Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? that is, to bring Christ down." The Christ of God is in thy heart, waiting and aiming to get the consent of thy will, that He may save thee. Life cannot be defined by scientific terms. Christ cannot be represented by names and words. He is above all names, whether they be names in earth, or names in heaven. Wherever man is, there

also is Christ, endeavouring to free him from the law of sin and death, by becoming Himself the law of the spirit of his life.

"If any man say to you, Lo! here is Christ, or, Lo! He is there; believe him not." Tell him the false Christs are here and there, but that the Christ of God witnesseth for God in every creature's soul. He tasted death for every man, that by the spirit of holiness and the resurrection from the dead He might become the Son of God with power, on behalf of every man. The man-loving Logos cannot be absent from any human spirit. In Him, and through Him, the Holy Presence of God is humanised for mankind's sake.

*V. Christ is every man's way to Heaven*, because He, as the Goodwill of God, is in every man's soul, seeking to subdue all things to Himself, and to make the soul a partaker of Divine Nature. It is a most comforting thought, that neither Christ's presence nor operations are dependent on man's knowledge. He can work in man through his knowledge, and He can also work without his knowledge. Babes and idiots know not that there is an atmosphere, but the atmosphere does not withhold itself from them for all that. The heathen do not know the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord, and yet He may have His elect among them, in whom He is working out His beautiful purpose. Before the Incarnation, many of the heathen

philosophers were under the influence of Christ, and received a measure of wisdom and piety from Him. They had light enough in them to make them long for clearer, fuller light; they had discernment enough of the excellence of virtue to make them long for the perfecting of their natures. We may hope, at least I shall, that not a few of them have found in Eternity all that they longed for;—that they have found their places among “just men made perfect.”

Truly, much more has been committed to the nations of Christendom than to heathen nations, and for that very reason, Christ has said, less will be required of the heathen. If the heathen are to be judged with respect to their little light, and Christians with respect to their much light, who will venture to say that it shall be more tolerable in the judgment for unfaithful Christians than for unfaithful heathen? Further, who will affirm that there have not been heathen as faithful to their little,—to their dim, beclouded ray of truth, as the most faithful among Christians have been to their much,—to their noonday revelation of truth?

VI. *For the sake of all men, and for the honour of my God, I glory in the independence of real religion;—* that the names and forms under which *we* know Christ and His Gospel are not essential to the presence of Christ with men. Theological definitions may be good and important for those who

have the holy and precious letter of Christianity ; but let us not suppose that the grace of God in Christ must be harnessed by them before it can reach the souls of men. Far better say that the light of the sun is withheld from the Eastern world, because they have not our English clouds. We may be very thankful for our clouds, but, at the same time, we ought to be thankful that the sun can dispense with them, in the distribution of his light. If any man will have it, that *his* Christian theology, or the Christian theology of *his party*, is not a cloud, but the infinite grace of God itself, I am very sorry for him. Some day he will discover that he has *not* taken the actual measurement of *Almighty Grace*, and that he has *not* mapped down *every method* of that grace. If the effects and uses of Christianity were restricted by Christian rituals, it would be but Christian Judaism. Christianity is the reign of God in Christ, not on the behalf of Christians only, but on behalf of "*the whole world.*" Christianity is the descent of a new spirit of life, operated from the Eternal Father by the Man Christ Jesus towards the human race. Wherever exists a human soul, there is the Christ of God working hiddenly, it may be under grossest darkness and the most disgusting corruption, to give him a little light in his darkness, and a little centre of piety ("as a grain of mustard-seed") in the midst of his corruption. In virtue of which hidden, Christ-given germ of "grace and truth," which the



eye of God seeth, many who are looked upon by men as without hope, are regarded from Heaven as "the heirs of salvation." "Isaiah is very bold," and St. Paul after him, saying, "I was made manifest unto them who asked not after Me."

From the fall of man, and the letting in upon the world of the black deluge of untruth, God has had work enough among men, to preserve alive in them the least twinkling of His holy truth. If the sun of grace and truth is at length risen upon you, while others have still no more than the twinkling of a single star in their sky, boast not yourselves against them. If you walk in the light, as true children of the light, blessed are you; and if those who are in darkness follow meekly and simply their dim starbeam, they too are blessed. I have a notion that there may be in the East and West, and elsewhere, simple heathen, who are more nearly related to Christ than many who are called Christians.

VII. It pertains to the consummate art of the Old Serpent, to hide himself under the name and profession of Christianity; and it pertains also to the unsearchable wisdom and grace of Christ, to hide Himself under the darkest religions of the earth. Never will I consent that the devil can do more under the disguise of Christianity, than the Lord Jesus can under the disguise of paganism. Say not, Lo! here is Christ; or lo, He is there;

say rather, *The Christ of God is everywhere.* He is with Christians, He is also with Mahometans, with Hindoos and with Chinamen; and here and there, amongst them all, producing His meek and beautiful effects. If, where Christ is not known, very few submit themselves to His hidden working in their souls, I must remember also that in Great Britain, where He is known, very few submit themselves to His authority. The knowledge of Christ amongst us is often only a "savour of death unto death." If any man have the Name and the knowledge of Christ, and not the Spirit of Christ, neither the Name nor the knowledge of Christ will save him. And if any man have the Spirit of Christ, though he be utterly ignorant of His Name and Gospel, he is not far from the Kingdom of Heaven.

Question :—Does not St. Paul say : "How shall they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard ? and how shall they hear without a preacher ?" For "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." Yes, and St. Paul instantly corrects the notion that the hearing of the Word of God is dependent on an outward preacher.—"But I say, *Have they not heard ? Yes, Verily,* their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." The preacher of God preacheth within every human soul ; and that Preacher is Christ.

## AIDS TO THOUGHT

THE great concern of our God in Christ is to bring the children of Adam to the second birth, and thus into His kingdom. For this end the Son of God was made man, and travailed in agony, carrying in His Bosom the souls of all mankind, to bring them forth anew unto God. If the Church is the kingdom of God with men, it must partake of God's concern. *She* must carry souls in her bosom, until they are born to God. She must yearn after them, "in the bowels of Jesus Christ." She must embrace them, and pierce them with her tender, holy concern, until Christ is formed within them. The first birth is not without a travailing mother, neither is the second. The love of God, powerfully present in His Church, makes the Church a travailing mother. When the Church ceases to carry souls in her bosom, however regular, respectable, and solemn her services may be, she is only a worldly solemnity. She has ceased to be *a mother in God*. The responsibility of the Church in this respect is very great. I am inclined to think that a single soul is never born again, apart from the tender concern

and anxiety of some creaturely heart, or hearts. It may be thought that there was no human intervention in the case of Paul, who, as he was journeying to Damascus, was suddenly converted by the Lord Himself. But the disciples in Jerusalem knew of his errand to Damascus, and the disciples of Damascus were apprised both of his coming and the purpose of his coming, and without a doubt they would bear him on their hearts before God. Intensely and importunately, their burning souls would appeal to their *risen Lord*, who declared to them so recently : "*All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.*" I fancy how they besieged Him with their earnestness, and besought the putting forth of His power, that the wrath of this fiery persecutor might be turned into His praise. Yes, I believe that every soul born of God has, and that Paul surely had, a mother in God. But thousands of souls will never know their travailing spiritual mothers until they come into Eternity, where much that is hidden here shall be brought to light.

What would the effect be if the whole Church travailed with souls? God has told us what the effect would be : "*As soon as Zion travailed she brought forth children.*" Nor ought it to be wondered at, that souls should be born to God, when the Church as the mother of the new birth travails with them in the pains and longings of the Divine Love. The love of God in the Church is quite adequate to such an end.

But indifferentism will never convert souls: no power goes forth from indifferentism. The gospel is a manifestation not of the indifferentism of God, but of the intense affection and the exceeding eagerness of His Love. The Church has grievously fallen into the sin of Demas. Under the prevailing "love of this present world," the love of Christ has fallen into lukewarmness. Vehement worldliness and vehement heavenliness are incompatible with each other. One vehemence always kills another. Lively faith in the world has supplanted lively faith in the kingdom of Heaven. And with unbelief, hardness of heart is always associated. Perishing souls are not felt for, not longed after, not carried on the heart. Ought we to wonder that so few are born again?

Eighteen hundred years after date, pity and contempt are associated with the name of Pilate: pity, that he was brought into such circumstances; contempt, that he did not act more nobly in these circumstances. With the strongest convictions of the right, he yields to the clamorous wrong. In a kingly office he shows that he is a slave. He fails to rule himself by truth, and therefore he cannot rule others by his authority. By selling the truth, and yielding himself to policy, he becomes a tool, a nobody,—a prey to wretched thoughts, and without self-respect.

There is a lesson here for every man. The judgment-seat of Pilate, with Christ standing before it, is in every human bosom. Every man must decide, and does decide, between the claims of his worldly nature and those of eternal truth. Every man yields up *self* or *Christ* to be crucified. Within every man's breast the decision is made to sacrifice worldly place, ease, and reputation for Christ; or Christ, for worldly place, ease, and reputation. Great decision! involving glorious or terrible consequences to all eternity. After Pilate, or any other man, has given up Christ to be crucified for the world's sake, rather than himself and the world for Christ's sake, whatever be his apparent ease and prosperity, there is a miserable man underneath. no bright eternity, but a very dismal eternity looks that man in the face.

## INTIMATIONS OF MAN'S IMMORTALITY

The clear, conclusive, glorious, blessed *proof* of man's immortality is the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. In this instance I am going to leave the sunlight for dim starlight. Many reject the sunlight; and for their reproof and conviction we must avail ourselves of the glimmerings of their own night-light.

Great question! are we to perish like autumn leaves? or are we to pass through death, "more than conquerors,"—not only to live still, but to live in the exercise of a purer, higher, greater life? Is it the law of the Creator, that the dead matter of the creation shall remain from age to age, but that human intelligence and love, for which all things are made, shall pass away like a dream which is not? *Common-sense people* answer the question, first of all, by a laugh, afterwards by a groan, and lastly, by turning their backs on the wiseacre who raised the question, leaving him in quiet possession of his own godless heart and foolish head. *Ancient philosophy* cries back through scores of centuries, *Absurd!* *Religion* understands the origin of this

insanity, and speaks of it as the "*perverse disputing of men of corrupt minds.*" The denial of man's immortality virtually maintains that the head is inferior to the feet, that a lump of clay is superior to intelligence. Whereas the whole visible creation is but a basis and rude ground-floor for the first days of the man-child.

I. *If man do not survive his body, there is no provision in the universe for a record or monument of its successive changes, eras, and cycles.* Is there no history of the universe? Stupendous changes have taken place: are there no spirits anywhere who will be able to acquaint us with the causes and character of these changes? Great changes will yet take place: has God no creatures who will survive these changes, and carry the report of them over the gulf of every disorganisation, into the new earths and heavens which shall be? In the wreck or dissolution of a world, are souls also wrecked or annihilated so that nothing remains to tell the tale? Has God no heir of eternity to bring forward the past into the future?

II. *Why are boundless capacities given to man, if he be doomed to perish with his body?* Why has he a capacity for knowledge so much greater than, during this life, is ever filled or satisfied? Why were not his powers adjusted, as the powers of other creatures are, to the requirements of mortal life?



Why should he be goaded on and on by a nature to which there is no corresponding good? Why should he be made restless with a thirst for knowledge which has never to be gratified? If he is not to live in another world, why was he made greater than this world? Why was he made to find interest in the secrets of the universe, in spiritual mysteries, in the being of a God,—questions which are in no way related, or necessary, to his life in the world? This restless, roaming, wide-casting spirit that is within us must surely be destined for some far higher and more wondrous life. A creature designed to perish in this world, certainly ought not to be gifted with hopes which this world can never answer, but only deceive and confound. An Almighty Tantaliser would be a horrible character to the Supreme Head of this universe. I have no doubt there is a horrible Tantaliser, who would like to be at the head, and who has great pleasure in being thought by his friends to be at the head; but he is not *The Head*, nor likely to be. There is the ground in man of an unexampled greatness and sublimity of character; why is the basis there, if the temple is never to be raised? Is the Creator that foolish Builder, who began to build His House and laid its foundations, but who, not having the means to complete His work, leaves it to be mocked by wind and weather, decay and ruin? Why does man approve his condition most, and rest most in his condition, when he is in advance of the world, when

he is independent of it, and of everything in it? Is this a sign that he is the mere creature of the world? How is it that spiritual satisfactions give him keener delight than those which are sensual or worldly? How is it that every man who is reconciled to God feels that God, much more than the world, is *his home*? Is this a proof that he will *not* return to God, but that his life will be wholly extinguished in the earth? How is it that every man who has commenced a life of spiritual progress, meditates with inmost delight the prospect of *eternal progress*? Is this a sign that the hope of eternal life is a delusion?

III. *Whence is it that the idea of eternity is connatural with that in us which thinks and hopes and loves?* We can certainly imagine ourselves to be living still and thinking still, after the lapse of millions of ages. We can entertain the thought of being happier, and of possessing higher intelligence, in a future world. Why should this be possible to us, if we are so soon to perish, body and soul, in this world? You cannot awaken in sheep and oxen the idea of future ages. They cannot regale their imagination with the thought of Paradise after death. Why cannot they? Why can man? Why should he alone be tantalised by the dream, if it be a dream, of an endless hereafter?

If man's being were restricted to a life on the earth, *his* thoughts would never roam beyond the

boundary of death, questioning, imagining, and wondering in himself about the possibility of an *afterwards*. The fact is, no man can coax himself to abandon the idea of his immortality; he can coax his tongue to deny, and the muscles of his face to laugh at the doctrine; but his fraudulent trick upon himself is no sooner at an end than his own soul inquires, very gently: "Why don't you convert *me* to your no-faith? I am *not* yet quite converted. You jackanapes, you, there is still in me, I believe, the eternal ground and possibility of a *man*." Promise yourself a life-time of ten thousand years after death, and your soul will instantly treat this promise with a "beautiful disdain":—she will not think for a moment of any portion of time *within* the ten thousand years, but will begin to speculate and wonder about what shall be *afterwards*. It matters not how **extended** the duration may be, you cannot get your mind to rest in it, *if it be limited*! The soul bounds like a hart over every period, however distant, and will accept no heritage short of eternity. It *will* break every hedge, leap every gulf, and *will* muse on the future, the *endless future*. If the soul be immortal, then all its tendencies and capacities are in strict and beautiful correspondence with its nature and destiny. Deny the soul's<sup>\*</sup> immortality, and your own soul will deny your denial, and contradict your contradiction. Persist in your unbelief, and your own soul will persist in calling you "*fool*."

IV. *Provided that man has no reason to dread an endless future, the assurance of his immortality will be clear and strong, in proportion to his spiritual culture.* Many an ocean wave rolls over some rich vein of silver or gold far beneath, but the ship's crew sailing over it has no suspicion of the treasure. Many an unvalued spot of earth covers, buried deep in its bosom, the precious metal; but the superficial eye of the owner sees nothing there. And many a man carries within him an inheritance of incalculable worth, who is not aware of his immense resources. The richest things are ever hidden from common gaze. The things of God are neither entrusted to the brute, nor to "the brutish man." The sensual man can have very little perception of the soul's immortality, for the life to which he has abandoned himself is not immortal. His is the false life, the life that is not lawful *for a man* to live, and there is no eternity which will be any comfort to him. Eternity will most rigorously punish him. But there is no man who reverently, wisely, and perseveringly cultivates his own spiritual life, who is not rewarded far beyond his thoughts. Let a man believe that "the Father of Spirits" is the grand awakener of generous and vigorous action in the human spirit; and let him not disdain the helping hand of God, where His Hand is stretched out for his help, in Christ; and he will soon find with what authority his soul will testify of the life to come.

An ignoble life genders ignoble thoughts. A spiritual life will give rise to spiritual thoughts. The man who is living to God, according to the will of God, by faith in Christ, will as soon think that he does not exist as that his soul is not immortal.

V. *The great gulf which lies between the powers of instinct and those of reason, would lead us to expect for the latter a very different end.* Instinct is exclusively related to the wants and enjoyments of the present life, and therefore may be expected to end with the present life. The soul of man, is capable of entertaining the truths which relate to another and a future life, and therefore it may be reasonably concluded that the soul is designed for another life.

Again, instinct attains to its end at once. If bird, or fish, or beast were to live a thousand years twice told, neither its knowledge nor its capacities would be any greater. Reason is progressive, and never feels that it has attained its end. Instinct has no desire for higher attainments: reason has an insatiable desire to press on, farther and farther still, higher and higher still. Instinct is always at the top of its tree: reason never reaches its summit, never sees indeed its summit. He who has fitted man for ceaseless progress, will without doubt give to him an eternity in which to make progress.

VI. *Is not the eagerness with which man looks beyond his present condition to a higher condition, a*

*hint of his immortality?* Let his rank, circumstances, possessions, fame, be what they may, his thoughts and wishes exceed them. What he has is comparatively despised. Other creatures can repose with full contentment in present enjoyments: man only cries out in the midst of his abundance, "More, more." And why should man alone be cursed with this fore-casting thought? If he is not to survive his body, it is a curse; for it brings into everyone of his possessions, and everyone of his pleasures, the feeling of insufficiency. By the constitution of his nature the future is more to him than the present. He slights the present as being always too little and too shallow for him: the feeling besets him that he was born to something greater.

But if man, like the other creatures, had been designed for the present world only, vehement hope and restless desire would not have been given to him. The Creator would never have suffered the present to be slighted and spoiled, but for the sake of something greater and holier than the present.

"Is this all?" cried Caesar at his height. Alexander found one world by no means scope enough for his powers. If man receives his all in this life, a Good God would have so constituted him that he should be satisfied with his all. If there be no immortality, our souls are too divine. We should have been made human cattle, if like

them we are to perish. Had I any suspicion that my death would be annihilation, my horror-stricken spirit would cry out: "O my Creator, why hast Thou made me thus?—full of thought, full of hope, eager for higher knowledge, and holier delights?—O why am I thus made, if at last I am to have life and being taken from me? But how wisely, how lovingly, Thou hast made me, if neither Thy kingdom, nor the kingdom of my soul, are of this world! In that case, it is but reason that the present should be as nothing to me,—that I should regard the utmost possibilities of this life as miserably inadequate to my expectations."

VII. *To animal nature the pleasure of existence decreases with age; but to the soul the joy of existence deepens and intensifies.* The young animal has many keen pleasures, but they wane and wane, as year is added to year. The old animal has many pains and infirmities, but few pleasures: in extreme age animal life becomes incapable of pleasure, and existence is a burden. Most mercifully, therefore, animal life ends. Our beneficent God has willed and arranged it, that where there is no susceptibility of enjoyment, life shall soon be extinct.

It is otherwise with the soul. From its intimate connection with the worn-out body, it is more or less oppressed with its partner; but the soul itself is deeply conscious of an ever-deepening

capacity both for knowledge and pleasure. After half a century of mental cultivation and enjoyment, the mind seems only to have acquired the taste for its own peculiar delights. Observe also, that the pleasures of the soul are not greatest when the body is in its prime; but when the bodily passions are subdued by age, and animal nature is all but dead to the lure of physical good,—it is then that the soul's susceptibilities are keenest, and its joys greatest. Our present experience certainly intimates that we shall become *much more human*, and not less, by the loss of our dull and stupid animal nature.

VIII. *And what shall we say when we see the dying man full of peace, full of expectation, and without a thought of death, exulting as though the raptures of the endless life were already kindling within him? Is this, too, a sign of the soul's mortality, or is it not rather sublime, victorious evidence that mortality is being "swallowed up of life"?*

IX. *Revelation, then, does not announce a new and unheard of doctrine: it does but strengthen, confirm, and establish the hopes of all nations. In a certain garden there is a sepulchre hewn out of the rock, within that rock-tomb lies a dead man: on the third morning after his entombment, the dead man comes forth, gives "many infallible proofs" that he is the man who "was dead and buried," and that*



he is alive again.—I exclaim : O glorious confirmation of all my hopes and longings ! Though a man be dead, yet shall he live. Death is his great birthday. It is his last day in prison, and the first day of his true liberty. O men, *be men* ! You are born for the glorious, endless future. Beggar not your souls by devotion to the dust. The firmamental splendours are mock splendours compared with your souls. Men are the hiding-places of *true* splendours. Men are not brute flesh : men are creaturely organisations of the Divine nature. Men are *for the kingdom of God*, the kingdom of God is *for men*. Men, accept your great destiny, and be worthy of it.

Hear a well-known voice, which, when ~~Christ~~ was born, had been four centuries silent in this world :—

“The wise man distinguishes himself from others by keeping his mind free from the bonds which the sensual passions inflict upon it, and by endeavouring to wean his soul, in part, from her communication with the body.

“Is not reflection most successful when we are farthest removed from all the corporeal feelings of our being ? When the senses are blind and dead to external objects, then the soul, having less intimacy with the body, becomes more collected in

herself, and is prepared to consider not appearances, but realities.

“Far more excellent pictures than were ever painted, are in our souls: shall we not inquire for the Artist, Who has traced these beautiful pictures?”

“By leaving nature and the senses, and entering into the soul, a better idea is gained of the Being who is purity, truth, goodness, perfection.

“In the true life of the soul the body is not only a helpless associate, but an inconvenient companion.

“The knowledge of truth is the soul's delight, but as long as the soul is infected with the terrestrial contagion, and distempered by the gross appetites of the body, we cannot flatter ourselves that we shall ever attain to our delight.

“If we have some vacant hours, and prepare ourselves to embrace wisdom, the body, the disturber of our happiness, comes in the way, and presents to us shadow instead of truth.

“We must wait for those happy moments when calmness without, and quiet within, make us totally inattentive to the body, and allow us to search for truth with the eyes of the soul.

“But how rare are such moments! we see, therefore, that there is no chance of getting our great wish till death.—As the soul cannot find out truth distinctly in the body, we must take one of two things for granted—either that we shall never be able to discover truth, or we shall discover it after death.

"The object of a wise man's life is to prepare for death : it is, therefore, absurd to regard the event as an affliction, for which the whole of life has been a preparation."

"But, my dear Socrates," said Crito, "how shall we do after your death?"

Socrates, smiling, said — "As you please, provided I am still with you." Then addressing his friends, he said—"I cannot persuade Crito that he who has been holding this high discourse with you is the true Socrates. He imagines that Socrates and the corpse which you will soon see, are the same thing! and asks how he shall inter *me*! All I have said to prove that, as soon as the poison has operated, I shall remain no longer here, but be transported to join my illustrious ancestors, appears to him as mere inventions to comfort you under my death. Be so kind, my friends, as not to say at my funeral—*Socrates* is in the coffin; they carry *Socrates* away, they lay *Socrates* in the grave. Such observations are not only contrary to truth, but offensive to the departed spirit. Bury *my body* as you think proper, but be comforted to think of the happy region to which *I* have gone."

## AIDS TO THOUGHT

*A little bird's sermon to a sermon-maker.* I was in the act of kneeling down before the Lord my God, when a little bird, in the lightest, freest humour, came and perched near my window, and thus preached to me, all the while hopping about from spray to spray: "O thou grave man, look on me, and learn something, if not the deepest lesson, then a true one. Thy God made me, and the like of me; and if thou canst conceive it, loves me and cares for me. *Thou* studiest Him in great problems, which oppress and confound thee: thou lovest sight of one half of His ways. Learn to see thy God not in great mysteries only, but in me also. His burden on me is light, His yoke on me is easy; but thou makest burdens and yokes for thyself which are very grievous to be borne. I advise thee not only to see God in little things; but to see little, cheerful, sportive things *in God*, as well as great, solemn, awful things. Things deep as Hell and high as Heaven thou considerest over much; but thou dost not 'consider the lilies' sufficiently. Every priest should put by his awful robes, etc., etc., sometimes,

and go free. If *thou* couldst be as a lily before God, for at least one hour in the twenty-four, it would do thee good: I mean, if thou couldst cease to will and to think, and *be* only. Consider, the lily is as really from God as thou art, and is a figure of something *in Him*,—the like of which should also be *in thee*. Thou longest to grow, but the lily grows without longing; yes, without even thinking or willing, *grows* and *is* beautiful both to God and man. Think of that.

“In conclusion, I remind thee that God has ‘many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification.’ But I perceive that thine ear is open only to voices of one kind. Thy danger is under the conceit of being the more godly, of becoming monstrous, and not quite God-like. Excuse a little bird. I am but one of the ‘many kinds of voices’ which God has ‘in the world.’ ”

The body is more than a shell, more than a garment, more than a house: it is the married, co-operating partner of the spirit. As the soul is fitted to be a habitation for God, so is the body fitted to be the habitation of the soul. The soul is no sooner affected by the presence of God, than the body also is affected. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the body takes on the conditions of the spirit. If the soul be in distress, the body also is in distress,

and refuses food, or if food be taken, the stomach has not spirit enough to digest it. In hours of social delight, the body is as much helped and comforted as the spirit ; all its senses become keen, the appetite is lively, digestion is vigorous. Every hour of life the body is receiving its condition from the spirit. If you pray, not only the soul, but the body also receives Divine influence. If you sin, the curse fulfils itself in your soul and body at the same time. The blood and brains of a meek, humble, heavenly-minded man carry qualities in them, which the blood and brains of a worldly-minded man do not. Two men being dead, the one a regenerate, and the other an unregenerate man, not only their souls are in different conditions and different worlds, but their flesh and bones retain the distinctive qualities of their two souls. There are virtues latent in all bodies corresponding with the souls which lived in them. If I may say so, Elisha slumbers in his bones. That is, as the man was, such the bones are.

Originally, in the beginning of the Creation of God (I speak not of the Mosaic Creation, which was the last, and not the first creation of God), body was as divine as spirit, and is capable of being as divine again. Vestiges of its divine powers are still inherent in the body. What a wild wilderness of a world this was ! But, see what a world it is become and becoming in the hands of man !

Or, see a blind girl reading with her finger-end,

and say whether there is not something divine still lingering about the body. Think, that the very skin, the outer skin, by light and rapid touches, should be able to gather up the Divine sense from the holy page; and that from the extremity of her finger she should feel that Divine sense filling, charming, and comforting her whole soul and body. You have perhaps heard the story of the blind girl, whose hard work had blunted her fingers so that she could no more read her Bible. Her Bible was her most precious companion, her dearest friend, and the voice of God to her soul: how could she lay aside her Bible? She took a pen-knife, pared away the thick skin, and read again; but now she could not work! What is she to do? She *must* work: there is therefore no alternative, she must keep her blunt fingers, and lay aside her Bible. In despair she took it up, saying to it, "Dearly as I love thee, we must part," and, putting it to her lips, to give it a farewell kiss, she discovered, to her unspeakable joy, that there was soul enough in her lips to read the precious book. There is a direct relation, and, when all the links are active and the channels open, a living communication between the eternal God and the outermost cuticle of the body. Marvellous body! Marvellous in its ruin! What shall it be in its restoration?

The Lord did not hesitate to take on Him man's body; for He knew that at first it was not, and that in the end it will not be, foreign to Him.

Can any honour exceed the honour which has been conferred upon the human body? Can any power exceed the powers? can any glory exceed the glory with which it is invested? What wonder that the Holy Ghost should beseech men to present their *bodies* a living sacrifice to God. Know you not that your *bodies* are the members of Christ? What an intense meaning this view of the body gives to the Sacrament of Baptism!

As soon as we have set out on our journey to go home, our home, by foretastes, comes to meet us. The peace of our home embraces us, the spirit like a dove rests upon our hearts, the glory of our home allures us, and angel-servants from our home bear us company and help us on our road. Oh, what a sweet home ours must be, that can send us such pledges of its sweetness, while we are yet a great way off!

People who have not set their thoughts and hearts upon going home make no preparation for home. The home-bound know that they must be "*meet*." And to be "*made ready*" for such a home is not a light business. Not only is the home so pure, so beautiful, and so glorious; but the Chief Prince is *such a Person*! The meeting with Him is the chief event in the eternal life of the soul. "He that hath this hope in him purifies himself."



What a heaven-ful of princely creatures the Eternal Father will have, when all the redeemed shall be presented to Him in the brightness of His Son's glory, even as His Son is the brightness of His glory! Christ has said: "They will shine like so many suns in the kingdom of the Father:"—a whole heaven-ful of glorious bodied creatures, each one emitting a splendour "like unto the glorious body of the Lord." "We are now the sons of God, but *it doth not yet appear what we shall be.*"

Aaron had to wear upon his breast before the Lord twelve precious stones, *not of one sort*, but each one reflecting the light *differently* from his neighbour. There was actually one nearly black, whatever the diamond thought of him. But all the stones being set equally upon the priest's breast, no one of them might quarrel with another, saying, "You are quite wrong, you are; you ought to reflect the light as I do. *You* will never be admitted into the most holy place." Even the dark jasper reflected its measure of light as freely as brilliant diamond. The former may have a meekness which the latter has not. Indeed, it is a known fact that the diamond *is harder* than any other stone. And hardness is distance from life in proportion to the hardness.

One thing is clear, *there is a tribe in Israel cor-*

*responding with each stone.* And the Lord requested that He might see the twelve stones upon Aaron's breast, with the names of the twelve tribes engraven on them, as often as he appeared before Him to minister in the priest's office (Ex. xxviii. 29). Perhaps it was in virtue of his representing, impartially, every tribe of God's people, that he obtained Divine responses pertaining to every tribe. A man cannot be the medium of Truth to all the tribes of God, unless all truth has a place in him. Learn, whether the priests and ministers of God ought not to comprehend in their souls and characters considerable breadth and variety.

Adrian, who rebuilt Jerusalem, caused the statue of a hog to be placed over the principal gate of the city. The Jews, having a pious horror of the external hog, which is comparatively harmless, but no horror at all of swinish dispositions, the God of *Truth*, who in the end brings to light whatever is hidden, caused the figure of their internal culture to appear without, as a monument against them. Brothers and sisters, be instructed by this law. You will have at last to confront, face to face, the outward signs of whatever affections you cherish and cultivate.

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Whoever well considers the state of the world and human experience, cannot but conclude that God is more concerned to make man holy than happy; for many are able to rest in their sorrows, for the sake of their use and end, but no one finds rest in unholy delights. In sinful pleasure God follows man with a scourge; in sorrow, with balm.

Dark-natured and bad-natured souls have no respect to any other God than their own will. Respectable, honourable, upright *worldly men* look to a *worldly god* for *worldly good*. The people who run their mortal race, "looking unto Jesus," are a different class altogether. To look to "Providence" implies no penitence, no sense of ruin, no conviction of the necessity of sacrifice and death, no faith in a path of trial, no longing for a new nature.

To look to Jesus is to look to the Divine Man, who, because He was Divine, found no rest in our flesh, nor in this world, nor in the god of this world, but fixedly kept His eye on another kingdom, and always took the straight road to it.

The natural man finds *his way* in nature, *his truth* in nature, *his life* in nature, and therefore his God is the spirit of nature. The new creature looks to Jesus as *his Way, his Truth, his Life*. "The Way," Christ, crosses nature's way; "the Truth," Christ, crosses nature's truth; "the Life," Christ, crosses

nature's life. Christ, and after Him every new creature, endures the contradiction of natural men against himself. The way of the world is a broad, open, tempting way, offering immediate pleasure and prosperity. The way in Christ is a way of regeneration, through a series of trials and difficulties. In the world, by truth, is meant the facts and laws of temporal nature. By "the truth in Jesus," is meant the facts and laws of the kingdom of Heaven. By life in the world, is meant the life in and according to the present world: by life in Jesus, is meant the eternal life now hidden with Christ in God, but in due time to be revealed as the One Life that always was, and that is, and that always will be. Whenever *the Eternal Life* is revealed, the thing that has gone for life in temporal nature, will be clearly and convincingly proved to have been death, clothed with the appearance of life.

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From the beginning of the world, even before Adam's fall, *evil and death* have been hidden under the form of *apparent good*. "When the woman saw that the tree was *good* for food, and *pleasant to the eyes*, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband, and he did eat"; but they soon found that they had appropriated a curse and not a blessing; shame and fear, corruption and death were generated both in their souls and bodies.

## THE HELPFULNESS OF THE DIVINE PRESENCE

ONCE for all, I mean by the helpfulness of the Divine Presence, not the helpfulness of a foreigner, but of a Friend, and of a "very present" Friend. That Friend is Christ. Under whatever pretensions a foreign God is presented to you, if you are wise, you will practise the strictest reserve : a foreign God will do you very little good. Every God is foreign *to you*, save Him alone who is God *in your nature*. Christ is *your* Lord and your God. In Him and through Him, the Divine Presence is *an infinite human sympathy*. "Lo, I am with you always." "It is I ; be not afraid." It always is, and ever must be, a brother that does us good. Unrelated good is not efficient good. This law is immutable. God is Himself its first Fulfiller. He enswathed Himself in an undivine nature, that He might come nigh to them who were far from Him.

I. *Who has not in his time been helped by the presence of a friend ?* That person knows nothing of the luxury of human life who has never been

refreshed, inspired, doubled, and more than doubled, by the presence of *his fellow*. Blessed is the man who has found on earth anything like an approximation to *his fellow*.

No one, of or by himself, can enter into the springs of his own being. No one can sound the depth of his own mind, nor taste alone the quality of his own affections. "Joy calls for two." Two are a necessary condition; joy is a third condition, consisting in the relation of two. Unitarianism is a very tame business. Apply it to God, and the result is, a *cold God*, who can have no joy of His own nature. Apply it to man, and you have a *cold man*, who knows not what it is to be a man. Grant a two-one, and you have a free, blessed joy-spirit as the result, making a Trinity, which is the only perfect Unity.

No one ever yet entered into, or found out the resources, either of his thought or feeling, until that particular person appeared, who had the particular keys by which to unlock his resources. The bell cannot reveal to itself the sound of its metal, the friendly hammer must do that. My friend, wherever he is, must put me in possession of myself. Many are quite conscious that the person has never yet appeared who can unlock for them, and lead their way into the depths and hiding-places of their nature. Others are quite conscious, that the presence of certain individuals gives them a totally new and different possession of their being. With most per-

sons they live only on the ground-floor of their nature, and for the time being are neither conscious of the higher floors nor of the inner apartments. With other persons they ascend a story, and look out at other windows and see another class of objects. With a *very few*, they ascend to higher stories, where the windows open inwards and upwards, whence the lookout is to high heavens and deep eternities. It is impossible for me to think, or to feel, or to say, what I should instantly think, feel, and say, if such a person were to stand before me.

II. *If the presence of a gifted creature be so mysteriously helpful, what help there must be for us in the Divine Presence!* No one can find in any single creature, nor in all creatures, help and sympathy answering to the whole of his nature. By communication with men, no man can ever come to the full knowledge of himself. The keys to all the mansions of his nature he will find in God, and in God only. "Walk in My Presence, and thou shalt be perfect." Every secret place and power in thee shall be unlocked, entered, energised, and developed. If thou hast anything in thee peculiar, or eccentric, anything misunderstood, or hard to be understood by thy fellow-creatures, "walk in My Presence," and thou shalt find in Me scope, exercise, and culture for everything in thee. The whole tree of thy nature will never break out into full flower, till thou

walkest and livest in My Presence. Thou canst never know the taste of thyself, nor the harmony of the strange variety that is in thee, till My Presence bathe thee, penetrate thee, fill thee. Walk with Me in trust and love, and in due time the tree of thine own being shall yield thee every manner of fruit.

III. *Heaven consists in nothing else than walking, abiding, resting in the Divine Presence.* There are souls who enter into this heaven before leaving the body. Divinely natured, sweetly dispositioned creatures rest in God, more than in their own bodies. Unquiet and fretful souls worry themselves; and by their impatient prayers, and restless desires, they would worry God also. Such persons are never tranquil enough to realise the Blessed Presence. Their nature is desert, and its boundary is the turbulent sea of their own passions and emotions. The sea is always ebbing or flowing between them and heaven. They are *constitutionally* far from the peace and joy of God. On the other hand, there are rare souls (who owe as much to their constitutions as to their prayers and virtues), who do walk and even *rest* in the Divine Presence; and in whom heaven, "clear and tender," resteth like the morning dew on summer flowers.

This is a very mature, chastened, mellow state of the regenerate life. Let it not be expected that the first day of the new creation, or the second, or



the third, will bring the soul into this sweet, reposeful sabbath-keeping. But to this precious state it is the purpose of the Lord to bring every soul whom He is forming anew. Ordinarily, the traveller has to pass through many wildérnesses and many fields of battle, many sorrows and many deaths, before he gains the height of the shining mountain, and walks as a child at home, among innumerable angels, in the Presence of God.

The first life of souls is in the heat and blood of nature : "first, that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual." This life gives man no conception of such a thing as friendship with God, *rest in God*. The natural man has a natural understanding, but not a spiritual understanding. Nor have persons who are only young in the regenerate life, a lively apprehension, and still less any experience, of that restful, "friend-like" communion with God, signified by "*walking in His Presence*." They have an awakened nature, and "a conscience void of offence both toward God and man,"—they trust in Christ, and worship God ; but habitual *rest* in God is not their experience. They think upon Him with reverence, they desire to love Him, and to do His will from love ; but they have not yet the feeling of being *at home* with Him.

IV. The truth is there is a nature which is not able to make, or to find its rest in God. The outward man, which is all and in all to natural men, is also

in close partnership with spiritual men,—like “a body of death,” not simply lying upon them, or bound to them, but enclosing them as the house and home of their better nature. What wonder that they should “groan, being burdened,” in such a house! What wonder that the new man should feel his situation to be “wretched,” and sigh for deliverance! The new creature meets with nothing but opposition from this old nature,—subtle, deadly, unrelenting opposition. A stubborn life of enmity is the strength of this body of death. It will not rest in God, and it is not willing to die. Earth and corruption, self and Satan, are in its blood and spirit; and its tendency is ever worldwards and downwards, but never upwards and Godwards. We must regard it, therefore, as our troubler and our hindrance; we must doom it to death. The angry, virulent poison of our spiritual nature has settled in our sensual nature, and constitutes its very ground and animus. The flesh is an incurable plague. It is a little world of iniquity. It is the throne of the devil. It is set on fire of Hell. The soul of the unregenerate man, instead of resisting, receives constantly and freely, the influences and motions of his degenerate outer man. Instead of being purged, during its life in the body, and qualified for final rest in God, the soul's distemper is often greatly aggravated and confirmed. Blessed is the man who is disowning and repudiating his inherited, depraved life, and whose gross-

ness is being consumed by the operation of his new-born Christ-life.

But live as they may, almost all souls cling to the hope that they shall, at last, be capable of enjoying the Presence of God. The heavenly reason<sup>r</sup> is not in them to reflect, that, while they are labouring so hard and anxiously to find their good and their rest in earthly things, a process is going on in their souls which will disqualify them for divine enjoyments. "Satan hath blinded their eyes;" and they do not see that divine principles and affections must be first in them, *as, an innwrought qualification*, before they can find rest in heaven and in God. By the love of "this present evil world," and the eager pursuit of its vanities, they strengthen and settle in themselves those adverse qualities, which will incapacitate them to dwell with God.

V. *Dear Reader*, if thou believest that thy God, found, felt, and rested in, is heaven, why not, under the gracious help which He vouchsafes to thee in His Son, *begin at once to discipline and qualify thy soul for this heaven?* If this be thy chief good, why turn away from it, as though it were a thing not to be desired? If it be the very end of thy being, the only right, good, and blessed end, why postpone thy qualification for it, as though it were a bitter necessity? There are many vanities: there is but one reality. Give thyself no rest, until thy many

cares for many things become one great healthy care for one thing. Thy soul is a very great reality, and shouldst thou enslave it to unreal good and deny it the only real good, thou wilt some day find it to be an *awful* reality. Suffer thy soul, so noble in its origin, to be withdrawn from dust, noise, multitudes, vain treasures, and vain pleasures, to find its sweetness and fulness in God.

Immense is the contrast between a man who is merely prospering in his mortal way, and the man who is walking in the Divine Presence, and prospering for the eternal life. Turn thou thy thought, thy prayer, thy heart to the Blessed One, that thy prosperity may be that of *thy eternal person*, rather than the prosperity of the fool, in *his momentary way*. Walk thou with thy Divine Prophet, and let Him make thee wise : walk thou with thy Divine Priest, and let Him cleanse thee from all sin, and make thee holy : walk thou with thy Divine King, and let Him rule thee and make thee great ; and thou shalt no more envy thy brother because he is walking to his grave with a few more green leaves about his head than thou hast.

VI. *On the part of the Lord, the covenant of friendship between Himself and man is sincerity itself, love itself, faithfulness itself : when, therefore, man on his part is faithful and true, the strength and blessedness of the covenant are inviolable.* Under the heaviest troubles and the wildest storms this holy

bond becomes closer and closer, and abounds more and more in precious endearments. It delighteth the Lord to see the soul presume upon the infinite strength of this relation. It is the joy of God to see in His creature the perfect love, which casteth out suspicion and fear. Let the Divine Friendship take possession of you, cherish it in your fondest, as well as in your holiest, affections, venture upon the *nearness* of the relation, and you will discover upon what grounds the soul not only becomes a disciple, but among disciples, "the beloved."

In times of darkness and distress the Blessed Presence becomes "very present." When friend and acquaintance stand aloof, and creaturely satisfactions are farthest off, the soul's Chief Love comes nearest. When all other comforts desert you, when the clouds are gathering, and distresses are thickening, "*The Comforter*" abides faithful. "Love never faileth." Jesus fulfils His word: "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." Dear fellow-disciple, when thy night is darkest, thy strength weakest, and thy difficulty greatest, remember the words of thy Friend: "*I will come to you.*"

As surely as the disciples are on the rough midnight sea and at their wits' end, so surely will the Lord draw nigh to them in their extremity.

VII. *Let us take a page from Holy History.* It is a parable, full of instruction and comfort for

all ages. Jesus has been alone, painfully alone, with the multitude all day. It is evening now, and He is alone, sweetly, divinely alone, on the mountain-top. His disciples are down, far down beneath Him on the sea-shore. Is it not always so? Night is creeping on, and Jesus abides in His mountain-solitude, in His mountain-freedom. The disciples are wishing that He would come: their boat is ready, and they are anxious to cross over to the other side of the lake. It will be midnight before they get to their homes. They are weary of waiting, the night is fast darkening upon them:—perhaps He will remain all night on the mountain?—they decide not to wait any longer. They are grieved to the heart that He is not with them; but it is quite time for them to cross the water and get home. They can come across again in the morning to meet Jesus. They push from the land and eagerly ply their oars, steering for the opposite shore. There is need of all their strength to-night, for “the wind is contrary” to them. Is it not always so? If men venture to cross the sea of mortal life in their own strength and wisdom, without Christ, do not the winds defy them to reach “the desired haven”? They row hard, but they cannot get across. It is clear to them that they will have to pass the night at sea, if indeed their little craft is able to weather through the night. The wind blows a hurricane, and winds and waves together make a mock at all

their power,—they can do nothing but yield themselves to be the sport of the elements. It is useless for them to say: “Peace, be still!”—the wind and the sea will not obey *them*. They are learning the greatness and the value of their Master now. But Jesus has not forgotten His disciples, nor is He ignorant of their situation. He has been an eye-witness of their hard and fruitless rowing, and He sees them now faint and weary, and their hearts sinking within them. He walks down to the shore. The heavens are dark and the sea is furious, but nothing can cut Him off from His disciples. They are about twenty - five or thirty furlongs from the land; He immediately walks on the sea to go to them. The disciples catch the sight of something moving on the water, coming towards them, and they are much affrighted. They have no suspicion that it is the Master. The raging of the sea has not alarmed them ~~half so~~ much as this strange sight. They become weak as dead things: “It is a Spirit,” say they. But He flings His voice upon the wind and dissipates their terror: “*It is I; be not afraid!*” Instantly they know the voice, and are quiet. “In the fourth watch of the night (day-break) Jesus went to them.” Is it not always so, that the morning breaks upon the night of our sorrow, *when Jesus appears*? Believer, dost thou hear the Master’s voice out of every providence, saying to thee: “It is I; be not afraid?” Upon thy roughest sea

Jesus is walking. In the darkest, wildest night, He is near thee. Thou mayest shudder at first, at the form of His Presence, but thou wilt willingly receive Him in any form, as soon as thou hearest His voice : "*It is I.*"

"Then they willingly received Him into the ship, and *immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.*" This is more wonderful than the walking on the sea. They had been toiling and rowing to make way, but they could not. They only got into danger : to get *home* was out of their power. But they no sooner received *Him* than "*they were at the land.*" Persons under bondage to winds and waves, and especially to space and time, will wonder much ; but faith in *the Master* will find no difficulty. It is nothing to Him, who is the law of all nature's laws, to walk on the water. He who transports His servant (the lightning) from east to west in the twinkling of an eye,—it is nothing to Him to cause that His disciples should find themselves at port, as soon as He enters their vessel. Electricity is a mighty force ; but what is the servant to the Master ? When God, the Law of all laws and the Force of all forces, was manifest in the flesh, it was meet that His eternal laws should have some sort of fulfilment in the letter. And it is only the very height and perfection of Divine Order, that eternal laws should supplant temporal laws. This is the light in which to look upon New Testament miracles. In them, eternal laws loom out upon us



from the temporal creation. It is an eternal law, that in separation from God, all things are contrary to His creatures. All our power and efforts to get nearer home, *without Him*, are in vain. It is an eternal law that the Presence of God *is our home*. We are at sea, with contrary winds, till we find Him. When we willingly receive Him, we are "*at the land*." *Going to Heaven* does not express the strict truth: the Presence of God *is Heaven*. "In Thy Presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." Travellers along the dusty road, in spite of their sadness, find heaven glowing in their hearts, so long as His Presence is with them.

VIII. *If sunbeams are potent enough*, in their noiseless operation, to give to our cold and desolate planet a new face, a new robe of beauty, and a new song; *what must not God-beams be able to do for the receiving soul!* Certainly the response of the dead earth to the influence of the dead sun, magical as that response is, must be a very tame affair, compared with the response which living and loving souls give to their living and loving God. Oh, if the soul could lie open to the forthcoming God, as does the bosom of the earth to the forthcoming sun!—all our ice would dissolve, and become warm, operative, and full of life;—our cold wintry earth would travail with a general birth;—the seed which the Son of Man has sown therein would be quickened

and bring forth fruit, thirty, sixty, and a hundred fold.

Wondrously powerful, but as wondrously silent is the operation of the Divine Presence. When God works, surprising gentleness and irresistible power are in combination. "Canst thou bind (restrain) the sweet influences of Pleiades?" There is nothing like them for sweetness, yet are they omnipotent. Think of the huge forest oak, which one while stands before you apparently in stubborn desolation, without one leaf of beauty, and again a little while he stands before you, a new creature, adorned in golden green. The stern vegetable giant, embraced and penetrated by the sun's presence, is first pricked to the heart, then relents,—the warm sap flows,—and the outburst of its golden mantle is the development of hidden, silent operations. Or, see the tiny blade, which has made its way through many hindrances, out of darkness and corruption: no motion was heard, no motion was seen, the earth grumbled not,—earth and stones were in its way, yet the weak thing has prevailed to lift up its head towards the sun. Yes, for Divine gentleness and power work there. The sweetest influences are the mightiest. Stand thou still in the midst of nature's verdant temple, where the Great Power, before thine eyes, is working in profound quiet; and healing, peace, and power will embrace thee, and come into thee. Thou seest that the Beautiful Power hides itself in very unlikely forms, and

secretly works out its beautiful effects. Pray to the Holy Gracious Power, by the name JÉSUS, that He would cause the mild influences of the Eternal Heart to steal into thy bosom, and bring about a spring *there*, a summer *there*, an eternal harvest *there*, for thy God and for thee. The Divine Power in Jesus will embrace thee, penetrate thee, diffuse through thee a holy "comfort of love," and by its hidden working will clothe thee with the robe of righteousness, called also "the beauty of the Lord our God."

"Noise is human, silence is Divine." Undivine souls, therefore, feel that more or less noise is necessary to their comfort. In silence, an uneasy feeling steals over most persons, as though they were breathing a strange element, or as though an invisible hand were about to be laid upon them. Absolute silence few can endure: the soul is apt to awake too much, to wonder too much. Men do not know the soul that is in them, and when it threatens to arise out of the grave of the body, they are affrighted, and would gladly flee from themselves.

The lone house at midnight!—the clock ticks loudly then, breathing is audible then, the pulsations of the heart are almost heard then. To vacant souls, this approximation to silence is awful enough, but how would they do under perfect silence! In general, man realises his body more than his soul,

but when circumstances constrain him to realise his soul rather than his body, he is far from being at home with himself. His inmost prayer is, "Oh for some noise, some outside show, if it were only sunrise, to lay this ghost of my soul in its grave again! This silent, conscious man in a man, this awful soul, beset before and behind by the Great Silent God, and compassed about by the great silent Eternity, is too much for me."

But the man who has passed through the great silent struggles of the new birth, who has in silence been disjoined from the terrible Hell, and conjoined with holy and glorious Heaven, is henceforth a master-spirit. He is a prince of God, he has prevailed over the powers of darkness, he has passed the strait gate, and inherits the calm power of the strong Son of God. He has conquered the domains of solitude and made them *his own*. He has beaten fear and weakness out of his soul. He is at home with awful things now, for he has conversed with them alone. Other men may find their hearts misgiving them, failing them for fear,—they may flee to hide themselves, and tremble in their hiding places; but *he* cannot fear, nor flee, nor tremble any more. What can agitate him, who has himself, and alone, borne and felt the curse of his own sin, and who by looking to the curse-bearing Jesus has felt the Divine healing flow through, and through his soul?—who has alone looked into Hell,—who has also looked into Heaven, and gazed upon the awful

glory,—who has stood alone, before the great white throne,—who has looked at all his sins in that light,—who has flung back his old sins and lusts into the deep of Hell, saying, “Thou hast what is thine, but what is no longer mine,”—and who has filled his soul with Light from the throne of God and the Lamb, wherewith to face and to fight the devil and his angels:—what is likely to affright or nonplus this man?

Man is no better than a leaf driven by the wind, until he has completely mastered his great, lonely duties. If he has no habit of retiring from all that is *world*, and of conversing face to face with his inner man, if he does not, alone, invite the gaze of God, if he does not draw down upon his soul “the powers of the world to come,”—then he is no man yet;—he has not found the life of man, nor the strength of man,—he is a poor, unhappy man, sporting only with shadows, and affrighted before the real and the eternal. He owns a great house, a wonderful house, but it is shut up, and he lives outside with his fellow *cattle*: the inside is wholly unknown to him, and he has lived outside so long that he is afraid of the inside.

Think, my good brothers and sisters, of the great, high, serene world in which you might live, and move, and have your being. ‘Enter into your closet and shut the door, and with the world and its human cattle outside, call upon your God, in the name of His Son Jesus;—in plain words, tell Him all that is

in your heart, ask Him to take possession of your soul, and to drive out the Hell-troops,—liars, tempters, deceivers, and destroyers, and give you the peaceable possession, under Him, of the eternal house of your own spirit.

## AIDS TO THOUGHT

ONCE or twice Jesus got into immense favour with the multitude *by giving them as much as they could eat*. Whereupon "they would come and take Him by force, *to make Him a King.*" Was ever such a thing heard of, as the multitude knowing their king? Kings that the multitude make they soon unmake again, or *would* unmake. They want a king, but they cannot make a king. Christ is King. He flies from the idea of being made a king by the people. In a few months they will spit upon Him, crown Him with thorns, and cry, "Away with Him! Crucify Him!" He sees through their animal enthusiasm, their stomach-loyalty, and hastens from them as from madmen. He retires at present. Another day, when they are not in the mood to crown Him, but in the mood to kill Him, He will not retire from them. On that day He will go forth to meet them, and give Himself into their hands. After which He will hide Himself from them, until, being instructed by the discipline of ages and ages, the people shall learn that it is not their part to make a king, but to

submit themselves in all things to Him, who is their kings. •

Oh, how blessed, that our follies and sins, with all the crudity and dross, hardness and darkness of old Adam, under the fervent heat of the all-consuming, purifying, perfecting love of God in Christ, must sooner or later melt away, and be no more !

The Divine glow which we must sometimes feel in the very centre of our being, and the bright peace diffused therefrom throughout the whole spirit, soul, and body, are a hidden private assurance and witnessing of the Spirit, that in due time we shall shine forth *as suns* in the kingdom of our Father.

God sees all things at once : we turn our attention *from* one thing to see another. The birth of every new condition is the death of an old one. The death of an old condition is the birth of a new one. If we go away into the outward life, the inward life suffers an eclipse. If we retire in favour of the inward life, the outward life complains of being crossed. Life on earth is absence from Heaven : life in Heaven is absence from earth. While we see the sun of nature, we see not the face of God : when we open our eyes upon the glory of God, we shall see the sun of nature no



more. So it is: possession is deprivation, and through deprivations we enter into higher possessions. Finite creatures must inherit the all things of God, *piecemeal*.

When the black mood comes upon me, when "the darkness wherein there is no light" compasses me about, I like to be left to it,—to surrender myself utterly to its embrace, that I may not add *my* restlessness to *its* miserableness. It is not good to be relieved in haste. If you bring patience and trust in God into your Hell, it is not quite Hell to you. The deadly nightshade growing by the side of "The Plant of Renown" ceases to be poisonous.

## THE GROUND IN THINGS COMMON OF THEIR SACRAMENTAL USE

I. *The copious descent of God's blessing into the earth is dependent on the integrity of "His seed" in man.* When man becomes corrupt and spurious in highest principles, namely, in those principles which relate him to God, the operation of God's blessing through the earth becomes very partial. The sixty-seventh Psalm teaches us that the earth will not yield her full increase until a full and joyful relation subsists between God and man. "Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. *Then the earth shall yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us.*" Moses, from the mouth of Jehovah, taught the people that if they were obedient the land would be fertile, and barren if they were disobedient. There are also notable words in the prophets, to the same effect: "It shall be in that day, saith the Lord, that thou shalt call Me, *my Husband*; and shalt call Me no more, *my Lord*. And I will betrothe thee unto Me for ever; yea, I will betrothe thee unto Me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-

kindness, and in mercies. And I will betrothe thee unto Me in faithfulness : and thou shalt know JEHOVAH." That is, instead of a cold, formal, ceremonial relation, there will be between Me and My people a deep, faithful, loving relation. Instead of a heartless, solemn relation, mouthing much and often, "Lord, Lord;" there will be a sacred and faithful marriage-relation. My people will not always wait upon me with cold *services* and hollow hearts : the time cometh when they will love Me, and rest in My Love. They will serve Me then without calling it a *service* : it will be their *delight* to do My will. And now mark what follows upon this holy and blessed marriage-relation. "*It shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel.*"

Jezreel is well known to mean the people of God ; literally, "*the seed of God.*" When the link between God and His Church is living, genuine, and close, the Church will be *Jezreel*. She will be the seed of God in the midst of the earth. When she fully *owns* God, and is fully owned by Him, when she is wholly and joyfully *His*, the tide of His favour will come with unknown power into the earth : all the links will be complete and in vigorous operation between the All-producing God and the soil, as the universal womb of all seeds.

II. *Man is at the bottom of Creation's series, and also at the top.* He wants highest things, and he also wants lowest things. He wants God, and he wants the heavens, and he wants the earth, and he wants corn, and wine, and oil. There is a descent from God through all things to man, and there is an ascent of all things through man to God. Man looks to corn, and wine, and oil, to be sustained and nourished ; corn, and wine, and oil look to the earth to be sustained and nourished ; the earth looks to the heavens to be inspired with influences thence ; and the heavens look to God, that they may receive from Him wherewith to enrich and bless the earth. Man unites all the series : The two ends meet in him. He is the knot.

The earth not only receives good from the heavens and from God, for man, but through him. The earth receives blessing from God through his higher nature, as the child of God, and ministers to his lower nature, as the child of the earth. The ascending and the descending ladder is not only on his behalf, but the integrity of the ladder depends upon his condition. If he be unfaithful to God, the corn, and the wine, and the oil are impoverished, the earth is impoverished, the heavens are impoverished, and God Himself is limited in His communication to the heavens. It is a fact that the rebellion and impiety of man retard the progress of the heavens towards perfection. Without man they cannot be made perfect. God is not straitened in Himself,

but He is straitened through man. God is restrained from giving, as His love would give; the heavens are restrained from giving to the earth; the earth is restrained in giving out its secret and highest essences to the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and the corn, and the wine, and the oil are restrained in the communication of their virtues to man. If man were a faithful child of God, if he delighted himself in Him that made him, then the operation of the whole series would be in activity: the Divine Blessing would descend freely into the heavens, the heavens would give the same freely to the earth, the earth to the things which grow out of it, the products of the earth to man, and man to God. From man, God looks to receive all His own back again "with increase." Man, then, must be saved, not simply for his own sake, but for the sake of the heavens and the earth, and chiefly for the sake of God Himself and His highest glory.

III. *Corn, and wine, and oil descend from heaven, and they descend for man's sake; and he is neither righteous nor honest, neither filial nor loyal, if he fails to render them back again in cheerful service and worship.* The elements, substances, and productions of the earth are heavenly in their origin, and they ought to be heavenly in their end. All things come forth from God, and they come to man, that through him and by him they may return unto God again. If man makes them terminate in himself, if he uses

them to feed, or to gratify, or to enrich himself, *as his end*, then he is destitute of the first principle of honesty, he is a wholesale robber. Instead of being a just and a good man, he is an unjust and a bad man. Nor will I ever allow that the man who is an unjust and a bad man in his relation to God, is a just and a good man in his relation to his fellow-men. If a man is unjust to God, he is also unjust to me. The highest obligation which a man owes to me is to be faithful to my God and his God. If he has stolen his own being from God, and is daily using his body, soul, and spirit for his own purposes and ends, rather than in submission to the will of God; if he appropriates God's air, God's light, and God's creatures, to exhaust them in his own service and pleasure; then, in the highest sense that one creature can be opposed to another, he stands opposed to every just and good man. He may honestly pay his rent and taxes, he may be very punctual in paying his butcher's, baker's, grocer's, tailor's bills; for it often happens that the man who is guilty of some flagrant injustice seeks to appease his conscience by being the more strict in petty virtues. All virtues are petty compared with the first essential of justice, namely, that a man acknowledge that his being and his powers are not his own, but God's. Whoever does not, with his whole heart and soul, acknowledge this, and live accordingly, is an enemy to God and to all His righteous creatures: he defrauds God, and he defrauds them all.

“O my soul, bless JEHOVAH.” “*He* causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: *He* bringeth forth food out of the earth; and wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man’s heart.” Remember, these things are from JEHOVAH thy God, and only secondarily from nature. God gives the vital principle of corn, and wine, and oil to the heavens, and the heavens to the earth. Dead earth is very far removed from life-giving, strength-giving, joy-giving corn, and wine, and oil. There is a spirit in them, and the spirit is from God and in God; and in a righteous man, corn, and wine, and oil become consecrated things. When the strength of bread, and the inspiration of wine, and the richness of oil have passed into him, they are in the Sanctuary of God. All things find God, and God finds all things, in man.

IV. *What a strong, glorious, happy creature God designs man to be.* He provides him with manifold bread, because He would make him strong in body, strong in mind, and strong in spirit; and He provides him with various wines, because he would refresh his heart and his brain, his muscles and his nerves, his soul and his spirit; and He provides him with the fatness of the vegetable kingdom, and with the fatness of the animal kingdom, and with the unction of His Spirit, because He would

have him to be rich in humour, and bright in face. God gives to man strength for food, and food for strength; gladness for wine, and wine for gladness; a sunny countenance for oil, and oil for the sun of his countenance. All the gifts of God are double. His spiritual good fulfils itself in natural good; and natural good finds its origin and crown in spiritual good. The Word of God becomes flesh, and flesh becomes the Word of God. God is wholeness, and He requires every thing and every creature to be whole. His inward things must put on outward things, and outward things must not be empty things. Baptism in spirit must present itself to the world in the form of baptism in water, and baptism in water must include baptism in Spirit, or it is no *Sacrament*.

A man after God's own heart is never a one-sided man. He is not wholly spiritual, he is not wholly natural, he is not all earnestness, he is not all play: he cannot be all things at once, and therefore he is all things by turns. A man may be very conscientious and spiritual, strong to do and to suffer, earnest against all evil, and always determined towards that which is right, and yet be a very imperfect man. He must be holy, earnest, patient, and withal carry within him a glad, free, childlike spirit. Men very deficient of the "oil of joy" pass for godly persons with their fellow-men, but not with God. The godly man, so called, has often no wealth of sunshine in him, or if there be,



he keeps it all to himself, very little comes out upon his face. Now, if anyone be hot within and cold without, his internal heat is a disease. God's idea of man is that of a strong, glad, inexhaustibly unctuous creature,—one in whose nature both the twenty-second and the hundred and fourth Psalm, and all Psalms, have an equal ground. Show me a man in whom there is going on a hell-deep struggle, and who at the same time exhibits a broad, free, cheerful spirit:—I fancy such an one to be a man after God's heart.

V. If corn, and wine, and oil are bodies containing spirit, and if the spirit that is in them is capable of entering into and affecting man's spirit, *we see reason enough why these things occur in the Word of God, not only for their own sake, but chiefly as types of things spiritual and heavenly.* Man needs earthly bread, but he needs much more the Bread that is not earthly. "My Father gives you the *True Bread* from heaven." "*The Bread of God* is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for *that meat* which endureth unto everlasting life." And we know that there is other wine than the juice of the grape. Jesus drank of the fruit of the vine with His disciples, but He will drink another wine with them, and they with Him, in the kingdom of God. And the Apostle says: "Be not filled with wine wherein is

excess, but *be filled with the Spirit!*" There is also other oil than outward oil; for Jesus said: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, *because He hath anointed Me.*" He is called Christ, or *The Anointed*, because He was enriched with the fulness of the Spirit. And through Him, "an Unction from the Holy One" is the privilege of all Christians. There is a profound reason for calling heavenly things by the names of things on the earth; for earthly things are named from the heavenly and divine properties which are in them. If there were not in our earthly bread the true, vital, bread-principle from the Lord out of heaven, it would not be *bread*. "The staff of life" would not be in it; and it would not strengthen man's heart. If the fruit of the vine did not embody a spiritual principle, it would not make glad the heart of man. It is owing to the transcendent unction, or oil-principle, which is present in the fatty substances of all meats, that the appropriation of food diffuses a pleasantness and sunshine throughout the whole man, from his spirit to his countenance.

There is a point of contact between the Creator and everything in His creation. God bringeth forth out of the earth, corn, and wine, and oil: they do not bring themselves forth. God is in communication with them; *therefore they grow*. They receive secret essences and virtues from God, and embody what they receive from God, in earthy matter. Indeed, as all things have come not of

themselves, but from God, there must be in everything a ground, into which the life and energy of God can flow. Bread, and wine, and oil are common, if you esteem them to be common, and make a common use of them; but they are sacred in their origin and in their inmost principles, and are therefore capable of serving unto the most sacred purposes and ends.

VI. *By a law as Divine as it is beautiful, Jesus has set upon His sacramental table, bread and wine, not only as types, but as bodies of the holy and invisible Bread and Wine, which strengthen and make glad the spirit of man.* And on the principle that bread, though an earthy, corruptible substance, contains in itself incorruptible, divine substance, we not only see why the Lord should call Himself "Living Bread," but why bread should be the outward body of His hidden, Divine Body. One moment He takes bread, and, having broken it and blessed it, He calls it no more *bread*, but says: "This is *My body*." That is, in this bread there is hidden and embodied My own incorruptible substance, which is "*meat indeed*." For man liveth not by bread only, but by Divine Substance that proceedeth from God doth man live. "He that eateth of this Bread shall live for ever." And if the fruit of the vine not only represents the wine of the Eternal Spirit, but if in the juices of the grape there is latent a comforting, exhilarating spirit

from God, in one sense it is a great mystery, and in another sense it is an "*open secret*," that Jesus should take the cup, and, having blessed it, say: "This is *My Blood*." If the Christian Sacraments stood in letter only, and not as Christ did, "in the power of the Spirit," we should be constrained to hold that they are out of place under "the dispensation of the Spirit." But as was the Lord Himself, so is His Holy Supper, to everyone *according to his faith*.

In our daily bread we discern the worldly substance, rather than the heavenly substance hidden within it, and we eat it for the sake of the worldly substance, rather than to find the holy substance. We eat it from stomach-hunger, and not from soul-hunger: consequently, the highest principles of our food are not appropriated. But in the Lord's Supper we are called to "*discern the Lord's Body*" which is in the bread, and to eat it for the sake of His body. The senses perceive one thing, faith perceives another. The carnal appetite appropriates carnal substance: the spiritual appetite appropriates spiritual substance. Whosoever, at this feast, eateth outward bread and drinketh outward wine only, eateth and drinketh unworthily. "The cup of blessing which we bless, *is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ?* The bread which we break, *is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ?*" There are persons who, if they were consistent, would reply to these questions, and very decidedly:

"No; the bread and the cup of the Lord's Table are *types* of the Body and Blood of Christ, *nothing more.*" On the one hand, the Sacrament is declared to be a transubstantiation of the elements; and, on the other, it is held to be "death's head," so much earthy matter, *nothing more.* These are the two extremes. Happy are they who espouse neither side, but who believe that, though the bread be bread still, and the wine wine still, the Lord grants His disciples in and through them to partake of His Body and His Blood. If only earthy matter be believed in, only earthy matter will be received: but if it be believed that the bread and the cup embody what they signify, then the Sacrament, as the Apostle says, is nothing less than a participation of the Body of the Lord, which is "meat indeed," and of His Blood, which is "drink indeed." Unspeakable is the difference between discerning "death's head" in the Sacrament, and "discerning the Lord's Body." But the inmost and holy principles, or substance of the Lord's Body, can only be appropriated by the inmost and holy appetite, and never by the sensuous appetite.

Having taught that there is in the corn and wine of nature essential and incorruptible substance from the Lord, in virtue of which they live and grow, by communication from Himself, let no one conclude that therefore there is in the bread and wine of the Sacrament no more of the One only True Eternal Substance than subsists in them by

nature. No ; but what is in them by nature is the ground of that greater thing, "the blessing," which enters into them when they come upon the altar of the Lord. Otherwise, why did the Lord look up to Heaven, and bless the elements, before He called them "His Body" and "His Blood"? Did He bless them without blessing them? Was His blessing a formality, or an efficacy? When you see the magnet so wonderfully affect the bar of iron, so strangely possess it by a new presence, can it be difficult for you to believe that the God-man impregnates with His Presence the bread and the wine of the Holy Supper? As soon as iron is brought into juxtaposition with the magnet, it is affected thereby ; and when the bread and wine are brought into relation to Christ, they are hallowed by His Presence. Has not the Church also in every age, and everywhere, first consecrated the elements, looking up to heaven and the Lord for "the Blessing," before their distribution? What worldly souls cannot receive because of their unbelief, spiritual persons, through their faith, do receive. "The world seeth Me no more, *but you see Me.*"

The bread, and the wine, and the oil, not only point to Christ and signify Christ, but when used in His service sacramentally, Christ useth them even as He used His own flesh, as a channel of communication to men in the flesh. And we have shown in a former paper, not only that the all-creating Word, or Christ of God, is present through-

out nature, but that the Cross of Christ lieth upon the outward creation, even as it lieth upon the soul of man. Nature groaneth and travaileth in pain under the Cross. Nature beareth the curse. All her days are passed away in the wrath of God. Indeed, men are the children and heirs of wrath, because they are the children of nature. But in nature goodness triumphs over wrath, and herein also she is a true parable of the Gospel. Spring, Summer, and Harvest are the triumph of goodness. Every morning the world is new-born out of darkness. Every plant that groweth out of the earth was dead, and is alive again. "Except the seed corn fall into the ground and *die*, it abideth alone, *but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit.*" The appearance of every green blade above the surface of the earth witnesseth of evil and goodness, the power of wrath and the greater power of love, the power of death and the power of life and resurrection. Bread and Wine preach to us "*Christ and Him crucified*"; and therefore the Lord hath set them upon His altar "*to show forth His death*" unto the end of time. Both corn and the fruit of the vine, in order to become bread and wine, undergo a crucifying process:—"Christ after the flesh" is not the Bread of Life to us, but Christ crucified, dead and risen again, is our Spiritual Bread and our Wine. Equally in nature and grace, not the Lamb, but "*the Lamb slain,*" is our meat. The Living Bread which God hath brought out of the earth,

and which strengthens man's heart, is "Christ and Him crucified." And the Wine that maketh glad the heart of man is the Spirit that proceedeth from One dead, yea rather Who is risen again.

VII. *Look once more at the earthly elements on the Lord's Table.* They are offerings unto God. They are the first-fruits of the whole creation. Christ took the Bread, He took also the Cup, and presented them to God; and from God, presented them again to His people, as things sanctified both to God and to them. They are pledges that the matter of the whole world is redeemed, and will finally be presented to God for His acceptance, and given back again to His redeemed creatures, a new creation, in which vanity, corruption, and death shall no more have place. What Christ said of the sacramental bread and wine, "This is My Body," and, "This is My Blood," was said in anticipation of what, under Him, the whole creation will become. He will deliver it from the bondage of corruption, and endow it with the glorious liberty of the sons of God. "All old things shall pass away, and all things become new. In Christ, man will become a holier creature than Adam was before his fall: the creation also will become a Diviner thing than Adam received it from the hands of God. To qualify it *for man*, God bestowed upon it six patient, successive periods of labour; but to qualify it *for God*, the Son of God will purge and purify it, and fill and flood it, with



the glory of His own Holiness. The Old Serpent shall no more be able to insinuate himself into it, an unclean influence shall no more come over it, the roaring lion shall never again set his foot on it, nor shall any ravenous beast go up thereon. 'When the Lord took part of the same "flesh and blood", with the children of Adam, He did not say, "This is My Body," and "This is My Blood"; but He said, "*Destroy this Temple*, and I will raise it up in three days," no more a destructible temple, but an indestructible temple; no more Adam's flesh and blood, but "*My Body*" and "*My Blood*,"—a temple in which all the fulness of God shall dwell! not as inhabiting a place foreign to Himself, but as dwelling for ever in a house corresponding with His own nature and glory. Christ is both the root and the first-fruits of the whole creation.—In His Divinity He is the root, in His assumed Humanity He is the first-fruits. If the first-fruits be holy, the lump also shall be holy: if the root be holy, such shall the branches become.

Reader, apart from Christ, what part canst thou have in that redeemed, blessed, eternal creation which shall be? Unless Christ take thee in hand, and present thee to God for His acceptance, thou wilt surely perish in thine own corruption. Corruption is thine own, thou art made of it; but in righteousness and true holiness thou art not created; and thou canst no more make Thyself anew, for eternal life, than thou couldst at first make thyself

of nature, for mortal life. "The law of sin and death," which is in you from birth, and was in you before birth, can only be overcome by "the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus." You must carry the curse of the old creation in your eternal being, or come to the Christ of God, that you may become a new creation, and inherit Blessing. Upon the altar of Christ's sacrifice your nature will cease to be common, and become sacred; and in the final presentation of the fulness of Christ's Body unto the Father, you shall be included, as "a member of *His* Body, and *His* Flesh, and *His* bones."

## AIDS TO THOUGHT

HIGHER, purer, freer, broader views of truth are always in the effort to descend from Heaven to earth. But new wine requires new bottles. The old bottles will do very well for old wine. Old forms of truth, like old bottles and old clothes, are constantly falling into disuse. It seldom happens that the persons who despise and abandon the old forms, have the new forms ready for the reception of the new spirit of truth. Thousands perceive that many things, long revered, are waxing old and ready to vanish away; but only a few rare souls have any perception of the new which are coming in.—A clear, full perception none have. Many see what to repudiate, but they see not yet what to embrace. The temper of mind which laughs to scorn the old forms is utterly unfitted to bring in the new and holier forms. Truth is too beautiful, too reverend, too divine to enter into a turbulent or a frivolous spirit. The Divine Idea comes with an infinitely still strength and peace.

Many gifted spirits, instead of humbling themselves, rather pride themselves that they have no

“sure word.” They think that they have outgrown the historical and worldly letter of Divine Truth. With more humility and less conceit, more prayer and less self-dependence, a way would have been opened for them *into* the Word, by which they would have avoided the way of the false spirit, *from* the Word. The way *into* the Word leads to truth: the way *from* the Word always leads to fables. But the mirage of nature is bewitching, and many brave travellers, believing that Paradise lies in that direction, never find their way out of the “waste desert land.” Others, aware that a deceiving spirit worketh both in nature and in themselves, study in patience the written Word, until the *true* day-star arise in their hearts. Holy, humble, patient faith abides waiting at the threshold of the dark place: proud and hasty reason turns round upon its heels and is taken captive by the lure of nature’s light. And no darkness so darkens the soul as the light which is darkness.

Dear mirage-hunters, whose hunting has hunted all faith out of their souls, how I pity them! They think that they float in the boundless sea of the Divine Goodness, and know not that they are taken in the snare of the Devil. Under the notion of peculiar soundness of mind, they are led captive by Satan at his will. Instead of reverence for the actual Word of God, they make sport for themselves out of “their own deceivings.” Instead of building on the rock of God, they confide in shifting sands,

in restless seas, in ever-vanishing clouds,—in fact, in anything short of “faith in Christ.” Their darling spirit of nature, *their* “angel of light,”—“the prince of the power of the air,”—will *not* preach *Christ* to them. Anything but that. Science, philosophy, paganism, wealth, pleasure, anything within the limits of nature, is open to them, but Christ is strictly proscribed. Their false being and false seeing depend upon their adherence to nature’s limits. Christ stands for *true* being and *true* seeing. Our *first* nature is false, because it is born of blood, and of the will of the flesh, and of the will of man, rather than of “*the Incorruptible Word.*”

Nature is a book of symbols which only faith can read. Natural and scientific men slavishly read the writing, but cannot give the interpretation thereof. The Word of God also is a book of symbols, and those who read nature slavishly and miss its spiritual significance, also read the Word of God without discerning the contents which are therein. Indeed, the Word affirms that natural faculties can only discern the things of nature, and “*cannot*” discern the things of God.

Nothing can be more short-sighted, nor a greater contradiction of all the ways and works of God, than the idea so often harped upon, that the Word of God, or Revelation, must be level to everyone’s

understanding, or it would be no revelation. There is much in it, as there is in nature, which is level to the ordinary understanding, but there is much more in it, as there is also in nature, which is level to no man's understanding. Thousands both enjoy and derive much benefit from nature, who make no pretensions to a philosophy of nature. And the Word of God is fulfilling very important ends in the spiritual culture of multitudes, who have no suspicion of a Divine Philosophy in the Word. Why, the human stomach, to say nothing of the human soul, which is in everyone's possession, is by no means level to every man's comprehension.

During this mortal preface to our endless life, it is certainly as much the purpose of God to "hide Himself" as to reveal Himself. *A priori*, who would have thought that the eyes which God has given us were incapable of telling *the truth* about the most obvious appearance in nature, the rising and the setting of the sun? Did not millenniums come and go, before the human race suspected that the clear revelation of sunrise and sunset was a revelation hiding, more than revealing, the truth? All persons living under the sun, should suffer themselves to be instructed by this great sign,—that the most glorious appearance presented to them is a fallacy. The fallacy is harmless. And it may be perfectly harmless to many souls, that they take the appearances of revealed truth for absolute truth. It may be that the dimness and mortification of not seeing

clearly are more useful to man in this life, than would be the results of clear seeing.

While we are in this house of flesh and temptation, the revelation of absolute truth would be attended with fearful danger. The resistance, denial, and profanation of *absolute truth*, would confirm the soul in a state of sin, to be forgiven neither in this world nor in that which is to come. The evil is great enough of sinning against the Son of Man, but to sin against the Holy Ghost is fatal. For the present time, "dark sayings," transmitting little light and hiding much, are more merciful than full light and absolute convictions. "Therefore, all the things of God are done in parables." Man himself is a parable: he *seems* to be flesh and blood, he *is* spirit: he *seems* to be temporal, he *is* eternal: he seems to be obvious enough, but he is a great mystery. Science thinks that she can dissect him, but he eludes her eyes, her fingers, her scalpel, and all her magnifying glasses. If in the apparent man there is hidden a transcendental man, be sure that in the obvious word of God there is hidden a transcendental sense. And as no cudgel, sword, or gun ever touches the very man, or does more than mar his shell; so all the assaults of science, logic, and wit are spent on the husk of the Divine Word: "What is the chaff to the wheat, saith the Lord?" "The Word of the Lord liveth and surviveth for ever."

Light lingers after the sun is gone down, and a beautiful mellow light too, but night is surely at hand. So the Spirit of Christianity is often seen to linger with those who have but recently parted with its Divine Forms in Jesus and the Scriptures ; but the destruction of God's idea in humanity is inevitable. Certain strict conditions are as necessary to regeneration as to generation.



## “THE FATHER OF SPIRITS”

“God is a Spirit;” and the one Father of all spirits. There is another lord and ruler of spirits, but not another Father. The great fallen spirit has begotten much in his own image ; but he is a tyrant and not a father to his own progeny. His delight is in power and dominion, not in fatherliness. He has become an awful prey to the love of rule. He reigned in Heaven, he reigns in Hell. He was the mighty Prince-angel of a very great kingdom. He is still “the Prince of the devils.” When he fell, he fell as a god ; myriads fell with him. Though a fallen, degenerate spirit, he is a fallen, degenerate god, and has the powers of a god. He has not only been able, for thousands of years, to maintain a counter-kingdom against his Eternal Father, but has, since he fell, greatly extended his empire and dominion. In all probability, for millenniums upon millenniums before Adam was created, this strong son and enemy of God was giving terrible demonstrations of his great powers, in the prodigious extent, magnitude, and duration of his defiant works.

If he has no more place in Heaven, he has a seat in the lower creation, and hitherto he has retained it. All elements, substances, and creatures give evidence of his presence. His ambition is to push his dominion to the utmost bounds of the material universe, and to reign over it as king for ever.

“The Father of spirits” delights in ruling, not for its own sake, but for the sake of doing good; the great, proud king-spirit longs to rule for the sake of dominion. He is the head and pattern of all the petty rulers, oppressors, and tyrant-kings, that from Nimrod unto this hour have been the scourge of mankind. Series after series of Pharaohs, Cæsars, and self-gods have drunk into his spirit, and well represented their head. Few, very few, kings or rulers among men have represented “The Father of spirits.” In only one instance, from the beginning of the world, has He been perfectly represented in human flesh. The man Christ Jesus has shown us The Father.

II. But if the God of all spirits be *their Father*, what an aggravated view it gives of the origin of rebellion! It is older than sun, and moon, and stars. It commenced in eternity under the Father’s throne. Hell is not a fallen Earth, but a fallen Heaven. The devil is one of the first-born sons of “the Father of spirits,” become a rebel-son. He is the lofty head of the great conspiracy against the Eternal Father and His government; and the conspiracy corresponds

with the height and mightiness of the original nature of the conspirator. Hell is the headquarters of the rebel-prince, but thence the perverting, adulterating, death-producing influence has overspread the whole visible creation.

Rebellion can make no better or happier kingdom than Hell. Heaven, or a state of happy society, can only be the result of absolute obedience to the One Father's will. All rebellion tends one way, and must end in Hell, or a state of society hopelessly wrong and horribly miserable. All spirits in flesh, throughout the temporal universe, who are under the dominion of their senses, and of nature-spirit, and who do not in the Christ-spirit, the spirit of the True Son of God, become subject to the Eternal Father, are under the will and power of the fallen son of God, "the Prince of the power of the air."

The great rebellion of spirits, of those in Hell as well as of those in flesh, must pierce the Father's heart all the more, that it is the rebellion of His own offspring. Absalom was the greater and more daring rebel that he was the king's son. And in the earnest and righteous resistance which the king presented to the stratagem of his son, there was hidden the tender grief of a father, who loveth the child whom he is bound to oppose. And if the devil was the first creature-son of "The Father of spirits," we may understand at once the daring character of his rebellion, and the intensity of the Eternal Father's affection. We can understand the

feeling of Michael the archangel, that he durst not bring against the King's son a railing accusation, but said, “The Lord rebuke thee.”

Nor do we wonder that “there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth,” for every sinner is not only a violator of holy law, but a rebel-child of “The Father of spirits.” The word, therefore, with which every sinning spirit returns from his rebellious course, is not,—My Lord and Sovereign, I have sinned, but, “FATHER, I have sinned.”

III. *Children ought to obey their parents, how much more ought men to obey their infinitely wise and good Father!* All spirits ought to be subject to “The Father of Spirits.” The nature of the Eternal Father is perfect goodness. It cannot be a hard or an unhappy thing to be subject to such a Father. Subjection to the law of His Love must be the easiest yoke that the creature can wear. The devil has not found the dominion of his own self-will so easy to him, as was that of his Almighty Father. The glory and blessedness which he found, while subject to the Father of Spirits, he has not been able to provide under his own rule. Disappointment, restlessness, fruitless labour, and increasing misery are all that he has found under his own hand. Under his Father's yoke he was not galled: under his own, he is galled everywhere, within and without. He was not humbled and confounded under his Father:

under his own reign, his portion is the perpetual humiliation of his proud nature, and the frustration of his subtle plans. Under his Father he was not Prince of a desolate wilderness: under himself he is reduced to horrible desolation, which he cannot save from becoming more and more horrible. Degeneration, defeat, confusion, universal tyranny, Hell, are the inevitable fruit of self-rule. If all spirits did the will of The One Father of spirits, Heaven, that is, perfect order, perfect blessedness, and perfect beauty, would be universal.

Wrong and only wrong, hurtful and only hurtful, and monstrous beyond conception, is self-rule. Subjection to the Righteous One is right, and it only worketh that which is right; subjection to the Good One is good, and it only worketh that which is good; subjection to the Glorious One is glorious, and it only worketh beauty. To be under our own authority is miserable bondage, for the Omnipotent and Omnipresent laws of Wisdom and Goodness oppose and confound us every way, and must for ever oppose and confound us. To be under the authority of the Eternal Father is to be under "the perfect law of liberty." Opposition to Supreme Authority is madness. In yielding to self-authority we sell ourselves into the most abject slavery.

We did not make ourselves,—we did not make the universe; we have therefore no right to hold our own nature, except it be under God: we have

no right to a home or a foothold in this universe, except we are under Him Who made it. Everyone who will be his own master and his own authority is repeating the devil's rebellion over again, and dooming himself to be humbled, broken, and tormented under the tyrant. Whereas his subjection to the Father of his spirit would be crowned with exaltation and glory, liberty and endless rejoicing. The devil is the first sinner and the first fool. He is his own scourge and his own shame. And every man who hesitates to become subject to the righteous rule of God is both a wicked man and a fool; and his wickedness shall scourge him, and his folly be a shame to him, while he has any being. When he is withdrawn from the shell of his body and becomes a spirit among spirits, no one in Heaven above, nor in Hell beneath, will respect him; nor will he be able to respect himself.

IV. Everywhere throughout the whole house of the Father, and to all Eternity, *His authority ought to be asserted, and the monstrous guilt and folly of any other authority made clear.* God ought not to give any quarter to proud and stubborn spirits. Rebellion ought to be filled with its own ways. Every rebel-spirit ought to be held in the miserable chains of his own limited powers, and in the darkness of his own folly. God owes it to Himself, and to His obedient children, to shut up all disobedient spirits to the straits and miseries of their own working.

If the law of God is the only possible right and good law, He ought to allow of no deviation from it. God and the whole righteous universe ought to abhor, condemn, and confound all attempts at self-rule. Under self-rule a Heaven could not be. It is good and righteous in God, therefore, to enforce and promote by every means subjection to Himself. It would be evil and unrighteous in God not to command subjection. God has the sympathy and approval of every holy creature in the universe for finally restraining incorrigible spirits within the limits of their own Hell. Well-being, honour, and happiness are impossible under disobedience: the disobedient, therefore, ought to lose all share in well-being, honour, and happiness.

V. It is infinitely worthy of the righteousness and love of God, that He has set on foot a marvellous system of means for the reconciliation of men to Himself. It is infinitely merciful in God, that He has exhibited to the whole universe *the final penalty and scourge of rebellion, in His own Son*. And "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" for the last penalty of sin is also sin's cure. By the sacrifice of Himself, Christ has in effect, and will in execution, put an end to sin.

God reasons with men on the guilt and folly of disobedience, and on the wisdom and righteousness of being subject to Himself: He entreats men

for goodness' sake to be subject to Himself: He threatens disobedience with indignation and anguish, and promises to honour obedience with the partnership of His own throne and glory; but the great; moving argument is that “*Christ died for our sins.*” And the Spirit of God, as a new spirit of life, given forth from His risen and glorified Son, and which is gone abroad into all the earth, is the great transformative power of God with men. The end of all God's ends is the subjection of human spirits to Himself, by Christ Jesus. By all teaching and preaching God meditates this end. By all providences God intends this as His end. In wearing man down by age and by labour, God's end is, under His all-patient and merciful mediation in His Son, to bring about the subjection of the spirit in man to Himself. By all sickness, weakness, pain, by all accidents and adversities, God purposes to persuade men into willing subjection to Himself. Infinite love demands that subjection to Himself should be the first and last end of His government; for in no other way could He do good, or preserve the order and happiness of His universe. Under obedience all good is possible: under disobedience *no good is possible.*

VI. “Be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live.” In disobedience the creature wanders from life, loses life. The life of all spirits consists in the presence, favour, and help of the Father of



spirits. How can His favour and help be with those who are acting in violation against His own infinitely righteous nature? Apostate spirits, who are under their own rule, whether they are in hell, or on earth, know not what *life* is. They call their own state of ill-being, life,—their disorder, vanity, corruption, and inevitable misery, they call life. Their separation from God they call life. They may call it life, but *it is death*. A state in which well-being is *not possible*, order *not possible*, truth *not possible*, love *not possible*, comfort *not possible*, hope *not possible*, will be found in the end to be more wretched and horrible than the word death, or any other word, can represent.

"Be in subjection to the Father of spirits, *and live*." Life includes well-being, honour, peace, comfort, harmony, blessedness,—yea, every good which can result from a holy and happy relation between the Eternal Father and His children. Obedient spirits, in fixed, settled, ever-increasing prosperity, make Heaven. All that the power, wisdom, and goodness of the Great Father of spirits can do for them shall come to all spirits, so long as they abide subject to His Most Holy and All-blessed Authority.

VII. *What a lesson to all creatures is the obedience of Christ!* and how fitted to make every spirit ashamed of his disobedience! Obedience must be infinitely important, it must be the first principle of piety, and of the creature's welfare with God.

Because man failed in obedience, the Son of God became man that He might make a strong and faultless beginning of human obedience, and be an example for ever, not to man only, but to angels and devils also, of perfect subjection to the One Holy Will. Herein is the highest view of humanity,—in that Christ never suffered His human will to move this way or that, but utterly abandoned Himself to the will of God. Every act of His life was one of subjection to His Father’s will. When a hungry man in the desert, after forty days’ fasting, the devil could not stir a motion in His own will. And this is the light in which to look at His sufferings and death. He suffered no will to be in Him, but the One Will of “The Father of spirits.” “He became obedient to death, even the death of the cross.” His will, tried to the uttermost, in all things was found perfectly subject. See Him smitten unjustly on the cheek-bone, bound like a felon, blindfolded, submitting to every indignity, and admire in Him the total dereliction of an own will. His creatures spit upon Him, but He turns not away His face. He is smitten with rods, but He *gives His back* to the smiters. “I gave My back to the smiters, My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not My face from shame and spitting.” He will be treated as a tool, holding a reed in His hand, and wearing royal robes for a mockery. Pilate may bind Him to a pillar and scourge Him, Herod may make Him his laughing-

stock, brutish soldiers may cuff Him, and tear His temples with thorns:—He will ask to be 'excused from nothing, in all things He will be subject. He will not only taste death for man, but He will die the criminal's death. He will carry His own cross, He will be exhibited on it at noon-day, He will die with thieves, one on His right hand and the other on His left, He will be scorned out of the world which He came to bless and to save. It is His will that His Father's will should be the one and only ruling will, and His own will utterly subject.

VIII. Folly, pride, and worldliness may see no particular glory in the humiliation and cross of Christ: the wise and holy universe see therein the first of all works,—the only solid ground of the creature's welfare and the Creator's glory. All the angels of God worship Him, that He has sacrificed self-will and infinitely honoured The Father's Will. "*Wherefore* God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every name." The first in obedience is the first in honours. The first servant sits in the throne of the King. The Lamb that opened not His mouth showed Himself to be the true King. All history sinks into nothingness before this one "column of true majesty,"—the obedience of Christ! Compare the glory of knowledge, wisdom, power, and rank, with the glory of obedience, and obedience hath the crown. Jesus has gotten the great victory over all evil, and

over all the power of the enemy, by His subjection. By His perfect obedience He has trodden down rebellion under His feet, and made an end of sin. In His victorious Humanity, as “The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle, He is *the King of Glory*.” “On His Head are many crowns.” When Christ has finished His whole work, and delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, rebellion shall never more lift its head in the universe. He will put it down once and for ever. Through His utter abjection He is invested with “all power.” He Who would have no power in self, has all power in God.

IX. See what ground there is for the doctrine that the salvation of God *goes forth from this Divine Man* to the ends of the earth. Through Jesus Crucified the Spirit of obedience seeks a tender place in every human spirit. The same spirit that obeyed in Him (the Man Who loved us and gave Himself for us) will obey in every creature who receives it. Love commands, and love obeys. The love of God in Christ was delighted to obey the God of Love, even in suffering and dying for the disobedient, that He might win them also by the same spirit of love into the path of obedience. As Christ has by His obedience prevailed over all the artifice and power of Hell, even so do all His seed rule by obeying. The subjection of their own will to the work and will of God in them is their path to victory. It is the path

of the Son of God. He has sanctified it with His own blood, and honoured it to the laying down of His Life. The highest moral symbol in the universe is the Cross of Christ. The Spirit of the Cross of Christ is the Spirit of Obedience. "The preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, is made known to all nations for the obedience of faith;" and is "mighty through God, to the pulling down of strongholds, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

X. *The universe, then, is in a state of War.* It is God's war. The enemy is mighty, beyond all reckoning and comprehension. The opposition is the opposition of "gods many and lords many." Their "strongholds" *are strongholds*. They are not simply based upon the breadth and might of materialism, but are built up into the reason and hearts of all mankind. Nature is not only the platform of the Living and True God, but also of the enemy. The natural understanding and affections of mankind are with the enemy. The world, the flesh, and the devil are a tremendous confederacy,—the subtle organisation of an opposition, worthy of a god. For "the world" comprehends more than one earth, or indeed the solar system, it includes the "temporal" universe, "the things which are seen;" and "the flesh" stands for more than the animal nature of man, it signifies mind and spirit, all

spirits which are subject to nature and its influences, all spirits which are not “born again;” and “the devil and his angels” are not a mere handful of contemptible creatures, but a universe of mighty powers. “The spiritual wickedness in high places” transcends nature and the natural understanding in man. The “principalities and powers” which are adverse to God, are quite heavenly enough for the taste of man, and quite divine enough to hold in captivity to their own will the world’s intellect and affections.

Learn what a lame affair *natural theology* must ever be! It is the dream of the natural intellect, under the moon. It is lunatic. The natural mind “cannot see the kingdom of God.” It can see a kingdom, — the seat of the high, deep, broad, stupendous war which God is carrying on against the enemy, which anomalous, adulterous platform it accepts as the ground of true teaching about God and His kingdom.

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XI. *In this great War God requires the help of His creatures.* God’s war against creatures is carried on in and by creatures. God’s opposition to “the devil and his angels” is shown and expressed by the opposition of “Michael and his angels.” He confides to His faithful subjects His controversy with His unfaithful subjects. He defends Heaven from invasion by His heavenly creatures. God contends with the wicked spirits which are in high

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places by His loyal spirits in high places. In the universe of His creatures God does nothing without His creatures. God will not settle the great strife faster than He can do it by His subjects.

XII. *God especially requires the help of man in this war.* The old spiritual wickedness in high, or heavenly places, has descended into the low places of the material universe; and it is *to man*, as the head of the material creation, that God looks to conduct the war to its issue. The Son of God became man not only that He might be strong in man, but to secure the help of man. If there had not been the most pressing necessity for the manifestation of Divine Power *in a human form*, the Word which was in the beginning with God, and which was God, would never have become Man. Nothing could teach us so strongly and clearly as does the Incarnation, the infinite importance of ~~the~~ in the cause and service of God. In the Lord Jesus Christ the Eternal Father has a Man after His own heart, Who will do all His pleasure, Who will reduce all the rule and authority of self-will under His feet, and establish strong and lasting peace. But as the Man Christ Jesus is to God, so are men to Christ Jesus. Christ must be in men, as God is in Christ, in order that the Divine Power may freely descend into the world.

Earnest brothers, listen to my appeal on behalf of the Father of Spirits. It is right that our

infinitely good Father should reign. It is not right that evil ones, however mighty, should reign. Their power ought to be restrained: their reign ought to be brought to an end. You ought to do your part to roll away the great reproach from the universe. You ought to give evidence of your wisdom and manfulness in the cause of God against the enemy. It is strictly your cause that God in Christ is conducting; but He calls it His and makes it His. It is His *and* yours. He has no interests separate from you: you should have none separate from Him. The cause of God is your well-being, and the well-being of all creatures. He has no other cause. From everlasting to everlasting His end is the diffusion of good, good, good,—the utmost diffusion of good. No right-minded spirit can withhold his help from God towards the realisation of this end. Against the person of JEHOVAH evil powers can do nothing. Infinitely removed from Him are all the efforts of the enemy. The Eternal Father would have nothing to fear as to His own Nature, if all the universe were opposed to Him.\* But the good of His creatures is as dear to Him as His own Life. In their afflictions He is afflicted. He would make Himself a creature and enter the field in person, as the Leader of the War against the enemy, rather than see His creatures fall a prey to the cunning and power of the old rebel-spirit. His appeal to His creatures, therefore, for their help ought to be irresistible. Come "to



the help of the Lord," ye children of men, "to the help of the Lord against the mighty." You are finite and your God is infinite, and yet you can help your God. He is earnest in asking your help. Your God loves you, and longs to be one with you against your enemies. The mighty powers which are contrary to God hate you: all Hell moves to inveigle you, to make a prey of you. On your behalf the Father of your spirits, in His Son, is resisting Hell. Let Him resist in and by you. Help your God, and God by you, and you by your God, shall prevail. Man helping God is, strictly speaking, God helping man. It is God in league with man against all fallen spirits, and the flatteries and snares of a perverted world. It is man consenting to act out what God acteth in him, and to speak out what God speaketh within him. He helpeth God most who letteth God help him most.

How great, how powerful, how blessed such a man is, words cannot say. He is a divine man, for God is in him. He is a good man, for God's Who dwelleth in him, and in Whom he dwelleth, is Love. He is a true man, for God is Truth. He is a wise man, for it is the highest wisdom to resist evil, and to persist in all righteousness and goodness. He is an honourable man, for all honour abides with God and with those who are His, and never goes over to His enemies. He is a strong man, and no one can assign limits to his spiritual power, for God is Almighty. It is written: "The people that do

know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.” He is an eternal man, for God never dies. How happy for children to have such a father! How happy for a nation if it had such a king!—A man steadily and inflexibly opposed to all evil,—evil in scarlet and fine linen, as much as evil in rags, and profitable evil as much as unprofitable evil,—a man always true, and whose motive was always the general good and never selfishness: what a blessing such a man would be! The blessing of one such man would spread to the ends of the earth, and through all generations.

We know that we speak the words of sober truth; for we have had *One such Man*. His Name stands for absolute devotion to truth and goodness, that is, to the glory of God and the well-being of all creatures. His Name stands also for self-sacrifice; for His devotion involved the surrender of His own ease, pleasure, reputation, and life. He is for ever and for evermore “The Blessed” and “The Blessing.” Every creature in Heaven, and in earth, and under the earth, is destined to acknowledge that He is the Blessed One,—and the only Blessing. He has Himself become an example of the duty which every creature owes to the Father of spirits: He has given Himself to the help of JEHOVAH against the mighty. All the mighty evil ones know Him, that He is the Holy One of God. All the righteousness in the earth which resisteth and opposeth the world’s prosperous and mighty wrongs,

is from Him, and all the holy love in the earth which sacrificeth self-love is from Him.

Creatures, *men*, will you be the tools by which the devil does his work on the earth? Will you bow down to the Spirit of the age? Will you sell yourselves to "the Prince of the power of the air," "the god of self-will," and weakly and wickedly walk with the multitude "according to the course of this world"? Because it is "the course of this world," will you adopt it, and persist in it, though it be a course opposed to God, and therefore opposed to all righteousness and goodness? Rather be ye subject to the Father of spirits and live. Avow your allegiance to Him, and to His righteous and good government, through "the one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus." Under God you may be men, under yourselves you can only be things of the devil, perverted and more perverted, distorted and more distorted by ~~degeneracy~~ ~~after~~ degeneracy, until no vestige of true humanity remains with you. You can only be men under THE MAN. Under Him you shall be men indeed; and every creature and every thing which are contrary to you shall hasten to get behind your back, or to bow down under the soles of your feet.—This because all the fulness of the GODHEAD is in THE MAN, and the Spirit of THE MAN in you.

Brother, be not an accursed thing. Be a brave man! Be a new child-spirit of the Great Father of spirits! Be a brother of Christ! Be a blessed man

and a blessing from henceforward and for evermore !  
Or, if thou refusest to do this, know thou that in thy refusal there is the germ of a curse, which will grow through all thy days and nights, and which will never cease to curse thee while thou hast a being. In the name of God Almighty, “The Father of spirits,” I now write these words, not here only, but on thy inmost soul,—words which it is not in thy power to efface or to deny :—*Submit thyself to God in Christ, and thou shalt be one of the blessed, and a blessing : stand out against this, in thine own will, and thou shalt be a cursed one, and a curse.*

## AIDS TO THOUGHT

*Be yourself!* Elijah was a distinguished man of God, and also a man "subject to like passions as we are." Put both these facts together, and *any man* may convince himself that there is nothing in his natural character or passions to hinder *him* from being a man of God. Elijah was far from being the meekest, or the most genial, or the most loving, or lovable of men:—some men have these characteristics by nature, but Elijah had not. He was a man of strong temper, of vehement passion, apt to be satirical and withering towards those who differed from him:—a man terrible in his words, terrible too in his deeds. But such as he was in nature, such he gave himself to God:—not to be used as another man of different character and temperament would be used, but to be used as he could be used. The fact is, God can use any sort of man, and every peculiarity of man,—only let the man give himself, as he is, to God. This is what Elijah did, utterly surrendered his nature to God.

Without judging his peculiarities, without saying, I ought to be this, that, or the other, let me press

upon the reader to give up his whole nature, in childlike, simplicity, to God. Suppose you *are* different from all other men,—suppose there is not another man in the world to countenance *you* in your individuality ;—just be what you are, God will own you, God will find a place for you and a use for you. The less you maim yourself, the less you cut and square yourself after man's judgment, the more simply you accept your nature as it is, and give it to God to work in it and to do with it as seemeth good in His sight, there will, in all probability, be so much the less of "the leaven of the Pharisees" about you. *Absolute simplicity is the only possible ground of absolute sincerity.* What chance is there of utter sincerity in the man who begins to hide his peculiarities, and to conform himself to the taste and judgment of his age? Let his only care be to abandon himself to God, and God will be answerable for the man's eccentricities. "Wisdom is justified of all her children," much as they differ from each other.

On the other hand, a man must be careful that he do not cultivate his peculiarities, for the sake of being peculiar. For by so doing his simplicity and sincerity of character would be quite as much endangered, as by the denial and concealment of his peculiarities. Many a man sacrifices both simplicity and sincerity to singularity. And there is an affectation of simplicity and sincerity, in which there lurks the subtlest species of hypocrisy. Simplicity consists in being and appearing just what you are, neither

more nor less. This is the "Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile." Even in the ignorance and in the prejudices of such an one there is *no sin*, for there is *no guile*. Moreover, as there is neither wilfulness in his ignorance, nor stubbornness in his prejudices, his ignorance will, sooner or later, inevitably give place to knowledge, and his prejudices to charity and impartiality. Whatever you are, be simple, and though your father and mother forsake you, "*the Lord will take you up.*"

Perhaps one reason why Elijah was taken to Heaven, without dying, was that he so freely and powerfully received God into his *natural principle*,—into the lowest and outermost ground of his being. Not only his spirit but his very flesh was filled with the spirit and fire of God ; and the spirit and fire, or glory of God, subjugated the corruption of his nature, and made his very flesh and bones immortal : so that he was taken bodily to Heaven. To speak philosophically, the pure fire of the Divine Nature so wrought in him, that in due time the physical law of gravitation was superseded by the spiritual law of gravitation.

Perhaps a great lesson is taught us herein ? Perhaps this case of Elijah does not stand in the Bible for its own sake, but to teach a general law ? Death may be the ordinary way, according to the course of

nature, into the kingdom of God, but it may not be the only way. *Perhaps* other men would be taken to Heaven without dying, if they yielded not their souls only, but their flesh and blood also, to the purifying fire of God? *Perhaps* it may be possible to change men's vile bodies, and to make them like unto Christ's glorious body without dying? It is possible, for it has been done. And the wise man says: "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be." Perhaps Elijah is a type of a large class, and of what may *some day* be common?

Paul indeed affirms that it is not absolutely necessary that men should die in order to be changed into glorified and immortal creatures. He says: "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." In another place he affirms, "by the word of the Lord," that some men shall be "caught up alive," to be "ever with the Lord."

Remember also that the Lord, the true representative Man, though slain, "*saw no corruption*," but ascended in His glorified natural body to Heaven. Will not the time come when His followers, or at least some of them, shall so closely and fully follow Him in the regeneration, that they also shall "*see no corruption*"?

Active people labour for "the bread that perisheth," both in the natural and the spiritual



sense. Passive people accept their perishing bread and give God thanks, giving them in return "the bread that endureth unto everlasting life." Silent, retired people are related to speakers and doers, as means to ends, as souls to bodies. Our silent and meditative hours are related to our active hours in the same way.

## NEW CORN.—THE WAVE-SHEAF

MERE matter, without life, is the only thing which is permanent here. Forms of matter which have *life* in them are not permanent. All living forms, whether in the vegetable, animal, or human world, wax old, dissolve, and are no more. Living forms owe their continuance in the material universe to ceaseless reproduction. All the forms of beautiful or of active life, which are now flourishing in the light of the sun, are very recent. The forms which *were*, are not: the forms which now are, cannot continue. An inevitable doom bears everything to destruction. If the generation of ever-new forms were interrupted, there would soon be no such thing as a single living plant or creature in the whole world. The dead matter of the globe would still be here, but without one solitary instance of life. Again and again the whole living world has fallen into the jaws of death;—the matter of the globe still remaining as the material and platform of future organisations. All we know of life, at present, is from its works and manifestations in death's dominions. We have innumerable forms in

which life resides ; but we have none of *life's own forms*. Life's own forms would be like life, eternal. Life lodges like a foreigner in a material vessel. Life to the vessel is a foreigner, and the vessel is a foreigner to life. Life will be ever and ever touching and working and playing on these shores, but, no organisation belonging to the material universe can retain the mysterious presence. Life is the phoenix of the world, always leaving us in order to be always here. Life is destructive of the material vessel, and yet it will tabernacle in the vessel. Neither the body of Elijah nor that of Christ is an exception to this law. Their bodies no sooner became life's own forms than they ceased to belong to the material creation. They were indeed substance, life's own eternal substance, but they were no longer what we call matter, nor subject to any of its laws.

II. This great doctrine of the disparity between life and its forms, applies also to the life of Christ in His body the Church, and to all the forms of Church worship and service. Sooner or later the life dies out of the old forms. Christ comes to His own, but His own receive Him not. The mummy is a very grave and solemn form, but it is no longer a form of life. Life was there, but it is gone.

III. *The new and future form is always reproduced from the old form.* The new phoenix rises from the

ashes of the old one. The old carries in its bosom the new. This year's harvest came out of last year's corn. The rising generation are the progeny of the fading and dying generation; and the rising generation carry in their souls and in their blood the future generation. Old life does not continue with us, and yet it does continue with us in the new, which is only the old recruited and born again. Thus the semblance of immortal youth is kept up in a mortal world. Death is cunning and dexterous, but life is more cunning and dexterous, and it ever and ever rises up in a new form before the old form yields up the ghost.<sup>1</sup>

The Christian Church came out of the bosom of the Jewish Church. The future Christian Church lies, *in ovo*, in the bosom of the present Church.

IV. *God is the author of the new body.* Matter has lost its integrity. It is deficient of highest, conservative virtues, or properties. By the presence and operation of life from God, it is capable of being wrought into noble and wonderful organisations (witness the human brain and the whole nervous system); but it soon betrays its inherent deficiency, and lapses again into disorganisation and death. The haste with which all living forms pass through their stages of youth and maturity, to ruin, is a declaration of the essential imperfection of the material. And the fact that new living forms are constantly

<sup>1</sup> See note at the end of this paper.

arising to fill the places of the old vanishing or vanished forms, is a sign unto us that the Creator is in contact with the matter of our world. "That which thou sowest is not the body which shall be," thou sowest a perishable grain, and it does perish, but in its death God is present with His power to raise from it a new body. Nature witnesses to the Destroyer, but it also witnesses to ONE Who outwits the Destroyer, Who, besides being the Creator, is "The Resurrection and the Life." He embraceth and penetrateth with His energy not only the perishing "corn of wheat," but the perishing human body; and if the human spirit be in co-operation with the purpose of His grace, there is generating and forming within the mortal body another body, which, before the burial of the old body, inherits its own immortality. "For which cause we are not discouraged" at our mortality; "for though the outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed" (acquires newness of life and substance) "day by day."

Neither are we discouraged that the forms of Church-life should wax old and vanish away; for God never allows the old to perish before He has brought in the new.

*V. The new body which is generated in and brought forth from the old body always corresponds with the old body. God produceth the new wheat, but always new wheat from old wheat, and never new wheat*

from barley, nor barley from wheat. "God giveth it a body, and to every seed *its own body*." Will you remember the law, and give to it its universal application?—that, as is the seed-principle, such will be the body with which that seed-principle will clothe itself. "The spirit of life" from God, as the inmost law and power operating in the seed, gives to every seed *its own body*, that is, a body which is the fulfilment and expression of the seed's own limits and qualities, whatever they are. If the seed be weak, the weakness will re-appear in the body. If the seed be diseased, the disease will be manifest or latent in the body. If the seed have ill and poisonous qualities in it, so will the body. If the seed be corruptible the body will be corruptible, if the seed be incorruptible the body will be incorruptible. From unclean and unholy Adam, God has created a world of creatures, but not one of them clean or holy.

Observe, especially, the application of this doctrine to the immortal man, which rises at death from its hull, or mortal body. Every man will find, after death, that God has clothed the principles and affections which he cherished through life, with *their own body*. If your inmost life be heavenly, your soul will be born into eternity from death, a heavenly body. If your inmost life, instead of being in and from Christ, be in and from your own will, your soul will be born into eternity an infernal substance. "God giveth to every seed *its own body*."

VI. *What to us is the end of a thing is with God a new beginning.* God always comes in at the end. The outer creation is always declaring, "I am not" : but God is ever in the outer creation proclaiming Himself:—"I am." The seed perishes, but "I am," and therefore a new plant rises and brings forth a hundred for one. "Man dieth and wasteth away," but "I am," and therefore out of the dead man rises an eternal man. Christ is crucified, dead and buried, but "I am," and therefore He rises from the dead not in weakness, but in power. He dieth out of a limited life and inheriteth universal life. "Ought not Christ to suffer and to enter into glory?" "Ought not Christ to die out of His humiliation, in order to appear in His glory for ever?" He is the world's single "corn of wheat;" "if He die He will bring forth much fruit." In the grave of Christ's dead body, you may commune with the Almighty Life: and if you have the faith you may stand over the graves which cover the dead bodies of your friends, confiding and rejoicing in the Almighty Life, which will change their vile bodies into glorious bodies. "The earth and the heavens shall perish," but "I am," and therefore, from the wreck, better heavens and a better earth shall arise.

VII. "When you shall reap the harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the first-fruits of your harvest unto the priest; and *he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord to be accepted for you.*"—

1. As an acknowledgment that not nature, but God, is the universal Quickener, Producer, Resurrection, and Life.—That it was God who brought forth the new corn out of the old corn.—That the new corn carries in its bosom new life from God ; and that the life which is in it from God is the point of God's contact with it, by which it grew, and in virtue of which God will produce from it all future harvests.

The sheaf was to be waved before the Lord, to intimate that it was *live*, and not dead matter. Stillness, always still, is a sign of death. Waving is from life, and waving, or shaking to and fro, stirs and renders more active the vital principle. The ocean is for ever and ever waved to and fro to save it from stagnation, corruption, and death. The atmosphere is constantly waved this way and that to keep alive the life that is in it. If it is allowed to be too still for any length of time, death gets in the ascendant. The heart and the lungs wave to and fro in the chest, as the engines of life, and the brain waves under the skull, and the blood waves in the veins : so long as the waving to and fro continues, the body is alive ; when the waving ceases, and stillness ensues, the body is dead. Exercise is a remedy against death. "Laughter doeth good like a medicine," for it brings into vigorous play the latent life of the system. You shake a sleeping person to wake him. If you too suddenly awake, your eyes will not see, and you rub them, or shake



them to and fro, to awaken the life that is in them. You shake your medicine before taking it, to put all its virtues into activity. There was a pool at Jerusalem, in the water of which there were strong healing virtues, but it yielded not its virtues unless it was agitated. Round about this pool "lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first, *after the troubling of the water*, stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had."

Waving the new corn was a token that it contained life: waving it *before the Lord* acknowledged that He was the Source and Giver of Life.

2. The presentation of a sheaf of new corn to the Lord was virtually *the offering up of the whole harvest to Him in thanksgiving*. The sheaf was the first-fruits, and represented the whole. It was God's sheaf, the whole harvest was God's. He grew it for man, and man should refer it to God with thanksgiving. The joy of harvest is joy that God continues to descend into nature,—to create our bread for us, and to hide His life in our new bread. Is it any wonder that the hills, valleys, pastures, corn-fields, and woods are represented as shouting for joy, as singing and clapping their hands before God, since they are from Him, and He is in them as their life?

3. *The new corn should be presented to the Lord*

*before eating it, for His blessing.* Seeing that it is produced from a corruptible substance, and is itself a corruptible body, good and evil, life and death, are both in it. If we obtain from the new corn life and health, it is through the blessing of the Lord. The curse is present in everything in this lower creation, and it is the constant goodness of God, ever waving and waving into the earth, through the mediatorial economy in His Son, that restraineth the curse and operateth the blessing. If God did not work with every meal we take, subduing the angry, virulent, poisonous qualities of the food, separating them and carrying them out of the body, our food would kill us instead of preserving us alive.

4. The new corn should be presented to God too, *as a sign of our consecration.* Man's bread is ordered to be consecrated *because he is a consecrated creature*, or if he be not, he ought to be. It is a shame to him not to be. Man is God's sacrament, God is man's sacrament. The bread of man not only may be, but is commanded, both by New and Old Testament law, to be taken into the Sanctuary. It is "Shew-bread," set continually before the face of God, that man may receive his bread not directly from nature, as the cattle do, but out of the hands of God, full of virtue, hallowed bread, right *human* bread.

O Lord, we bring our bread, not directly from our fields to our tables, but from our fields first to

Thee, for we would find Thee in our daily bread. We wave the corn before Thee, we set our bread on Thy table, because we wish the life and health and strength which we derive from our bread to be Thine, and to serve Thee. As the corn came from Thee, we pray that it may not be separated from Thee, in us. We desire to find Thee in it, and that it may find Thee in us. When it enters into us, let us not appropriate its earthy properties only, and miss the Divine Life that is in it. As it grew in the field from and by Thy Helpful Presence, as it waved and waved in the field before Thee, and being gathered it is presented to Thee, so when it shall be in us let it still wave in our blood and live in our life, before the Lord our God.

VIII. Not on the Jewish Sabbath, but "*on the morrow after the Sabbath,*" the first-fruits of the corn were to be presented, that is, *on Sunday*. As a creature of the first creation, man is ruined, he has lost eternal life and lost everything Divine. His very bread, therefore, by an ordinance of God, is as it were separated from the week of creation, and introduced into the first day of new time, *after the seventh day*. The curse has seized man, and he must be put upon new ground, or he is lost for ever. The curse is gone through the whole creation, and man must not eat nature's bread without first bringing it to the Lord for a new blessing, lest he eat the curse. The old habit, once as earnest

as human life is earnest, of asking the Divine Blessing before a meal, has a deep and sacred ground. But in these days the world has got into the ascendant, and human life has miserably sunk in the shallows, and to a common, worldly, shallow life everything is common, worldly, and shallow.

The man Christ Jesus, as the first-fruits of human life unto God, as the world's Divine Seed-Corn, arose in strict correspondence with the ancient law of waving the new corn before the Lord. "*On the morrow after the Sabbath,*" Jesus, as the New Head of the human race, rose from the dead. "He is the Head of the body, the Church: Who is the beginning, *the first-born from the dead.*" And as after the presentation of the first-fruits, seven full sabbaths intervened, and then on the fiftieth day (Sunday again), came the Jewish feast of Pentecost, so also seven full Jewish sabbaths intervened between the resurrection of the New Humanity in Christ and the descent from Heaven of the Bread of Life.

•Read the original law: "You shall count unto you from the morrow after the Sabbath, *from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave-offering,* seven sabbaths shall be complete. Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the Lord. You shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves," etc. etc. etc. The Pentecost of the old dispensation reacheth unto the Pentecost of the new, and the Pentecost of the new, reacheth

to the ends of the earth, and the end of the world.

The New Man is risen from the dead, ascended into Heaven, accepted of God, filled with the fulness of GODHEAD, and again given to the world in a new form, as "the bread of God" for all mankind, as a new spirit of life for all flesh. The Sacrament is complete. God and man are met, are one. Man is God's bread, God is man's bread.

"My Father giveth you the True Bread from Heaven. The Bread of God is He which cometh down from Heaven, and giveth life unto the world." But the new life which the Bread of God raiseth in us belongs not to the old creation, but to the new: after a few days, therefore, our new life will be transferred from its earthly husk to its own kingdom, to be a joyous wave-offering to God for ever.

*The Note (see page 293).*

I am sorry to say that this is the only kind of immortality which some of the people's leading and chosen teachers know anything about. Their god Saturn, according to their philosophy, is not merely a petty time-god, but their god of gods, they know no other. He is under the necessity of constantly eating up his children, in order to the perpetuity of the race. His resources are by no means inexhaustible: he must take care lest his material be all used up, and the space of his universe inconveniently filled. Yet, being a proud god, he delights in making a feint of boundless resources and boundless room; and this he does by devouring the old and bringing it forth anew.

"We (Emerson and Carlyle) sat down and talked of the immortality of the soul. It was not Carlyle's fault that we talked on that topic, for he had the natural disinclination of every nimble spirit to bruise itself against walls, and did not like to place himself where no step can be taken" (Emerson's *English Traits*).

O my soul, pity and weep for England's great man, and America's great man, both of them under captivity unto this day, to the soul-stupefying swaddling-bands of sensuousness. Their prison-house is so contracted that they are afraid to stir lest they should "bruise themselves against its walls." Indeed, from the place where they are, "*no step can be taken.*" It is quite right that men who deny personality to God, should see no way of retaining their own personality. Every capital error entails a capital penalty. And it is surely penalty enough to be in such a fix, as are those men, on all subjects of profoundest human interest.

Alas! my brothers! alas, all ye smaller or greater Indian gods! German gods! British and American gods! you are all of you planetary and sub-solar gods. You are all of you captives: the outer universe shuts you in, and you see no way of escape. If you had only ears to hear, you should hear of a strait gate of deliverance for you, by passing through which you should find a God infinitely transcending all your gods, and infinitely greater than *your first idea of an impersonal nature-spirit*:—you should find Him, I don't mean the universal gas, but *Him* to whom your universal gas-deity is a servant of servants. Until then, your seeing, on all Divine and highest human subjects, will be mis-seeing, and your spirituality will be subject to the Elements and the Prince of them: not spirituality, but the conceit of spirituality, and as distinct from genuine spirituality as Satan, in the character of "an angel of light," is distinct from a true Son of "the Father of Lights."

## AIDS TO THOUGHT.

*The Lord's Day.* Stations on the line of your journey are not your journey's end, but each one brings you nearer. Such are our Lord's Days.

A haven is not *home*, but it is a place of quiet and rest where the rough waves are stayed. Such is "The Lord's Day."

A garden is a piece of common land, and yet it has ceased to be common land. It is an effort to regain Paradise. Such is "the Lord's Day."

A bud is not a flower, but it is the promise of a flower. Such is "The Lord's Day."

The world's week tempts you to sell your soul to the flesh and the world: "The Lord's Day" calls you to remembrance, and begs you rather to sacrifice earth to Heaven and time to Eternity, than Heaven to earth and Eternity to time.

The six days not only claim you as captives of the earth, but do their best to keep the prison-doors shut, that you may forget *the way out*. "The Lord's Day" sets before you an open door. Samson has carried the gates away. "The Lord's Day" summons you to the threshold of your house

of bondage, to look forth into immortality, *your immortality*.

The true Lord's Day is the Eternal Life, but a type of it is given to you on earth, that you may be refreshed in the body, with the anticipation of the great freedom wherewith the Lord will make you free.

Not any separate or favourite part of the Bible, but *the Bible* is the Word of God ; and should be studied *as one and whole*. The fashion of saying the most that can be made of certain texts, whatever good service it fulfils, does not lead to enlarged and harmonious views of the whole Word of God. I read the Psalms, I read the Prophets, I read the words of Christ and His Apostles, and I exclaim, "O the depth!" but when I read the words of many who think that they represent the Word of God, I exclaim, "O the shallowness! O the monotony!" "The *true* Grace of God" is the fulness of His Truth. Christ on His Cross teaches us the world's estimate of Truth: the reign of Christ in Glory reveals to us Heaven's estimate of Truth.

If the Grace of Christ had not *Eternal Truth* for its strength and authority, it would be unworthy of our acceptance: it would be despicable in the eyes of all righteous creatures. But the mighty support which the Grace of God gives to the soul



is proof enough that it has the sanction and warranty of Eternal Truth.

If God be Himself the chief mourner over the condition of His creation, it follows that those who mourn with Him must be "blessed" indeed. An especial mark is set upon them. They are all crown-jewels. Godly sorrow is the sorrow of God, reproduced in a tender, beautiful soul, by which the creature is brought into closest sympathy with God.

Though the sun is the source and fountain of light, there is little good in gazing at the sun except to get blinded. No one ever saw the better for looking the sun directly in the face. It is a child's trick : grown-up people know better. We use the light which the sun gives, to see by, and to search into all things,—the sun excepted. Him we cannot explore, beyond what he reveals of himself in the light and heat which he sheds upon us, and in the colours by which he is reflected from the earth. There is no searching of the sun : our eyes are too weak. How much less can we search the sun's Creator, before Whom the myriads of suns are but as so many cloud-bodies ! His revelation of Himself, in His works and in His

Word, in His Son and in our souls, is more than enough for us. Persons who dare to go, as they say, in a directer way to Himself, are like children looking at the sun, who, instead of getting more light and better eyes, get less light and an infatuated eye.

For every hour that you are undervalued, your value in full rests quietly in the Savings Bank at compound interest. The uttermost mite of it is sure to you. The Bank of *Infinite Justice cannot fail*. In the end, it is impossible for any man to be defrauded of *his own*.

## WARP AND WOOF

THE warp is the foundation of the texture, or cloth: the woof is that which is shot across the warp. The warp is the straight and proper direction of the threads; and yet to warp means to turn or twist out of the proper direction, to deviate from the straight course. This is strange. But perhaps it is worthy of this strange world, in which the course of God is so completely crossed and obscured by another course, that the Divine order itself is called the Cross, and felt to be the cross. God's warp is crossed by a strange woof, which both overruns and underlies it, until the proud woof presumes that it is the true and proper substance, and that its course is the only true and proper course. The eternal warp of God, the true foundation-substance, is regarded as the cross, by that which is chargeable with having crossed it.

II. The boldness and self-confidence of the rationalistic argument against absolutely spiritual laws are proof enough that the human mind has

accepted the cross-working as the original working of God. Manifestations of spiritual or Divine laws we call miracles, and as miracles cross or supersede the order of nature, and as the order of nature, *as it now is*, is assumed to be according to God, miracles are objected to as violations of Divine order. Whereas miracles are possible in nature, just from nature's imperfection. As the power of God works less freely and fully in nature than in the kingdom of Heaven, the laws and course of nature are capable of being broken in upon by higher laws. Miracles are only instances of the direct course of God, and signs of the powers of that true human life from which we have fallen.

III. The fact is, in our world, that which ought to be first is not first. Did absolutely Divine law prevail in the present creation, "the things seen" would not be "temporal," but eternal. Were the substance and order of nature according to God, it would not be a fallen creation, but the pure, original creation of God. But God testifies that all flesh has corrupted its way, and that this whole creation is a perverted and degenerate thing. The testimony of nature to the same effect is full and unanswerable. There is a beautiful Divine protest and strife throughout nature against her vanity and corruption; but vanity, corruption, and sore travail abide. Creation

waits for her Palingenesia (her Divine *re*-birth), and groans for what she waits. God has said that she shall be purged and renewed in the fire of His Holy Nature, and she is restless till it be fulfilled. The law concerning the leprous garment is the law of the whole creation. — “If the plague be spread in the garment, either in the warp or in the woof, the plague is a fretting leprosy; it is unclean: the priest shall therefore burn that garment.” A fretting leprosy has invaded universal nature: it is unclean, it shall be burnt in the fire. “The earth and the works which are therein shall be burned up.” This holy fire-baptism will include the elements also, and the visible heavens. — “The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.” Behind the veil of the present leprous creation there sitteth One upon “a great white throne,” from the face of Whose glory the earth and the heaven shall flee away. That is, the “flaming fire” of His Holiness shall pass through and dissolve “the things which are seen,” and out of the fire shall come “new heavens and a new earth,” wherein all cross-working shall cease, and there shall be no more “a fretting leprosy;” but the glorious righteousness of Him that sitteth upon “the great white throne” shall be all and in all. A great white throne is worthy of white or faultless dominions, and in due time the energy of the throne will create its own corresponding circumference.

IV. Cross-working may be inevitable, for a time, but it is not a beautiful business. God has permitted His work to be crossed and marred, but man, and nature are redeemed, and in the end will be restored to more than their first estate.

V. The true foundation of the universal cloth, material, or nature, is the original warp of God, but the operation of a thwarting, or cross purpose, has generated a gross, adulterous, corruptible substance; and the Divine warp scarcely comes into view,—it is forestalled by the adulterous weft. By means of that which is, that which is not has acquired for itself appearance. The word *appearance*, therefore, has come to mean not the manifestation of the true Substance, or reality, but the very reverse,—that which hides Truth and Reality.

VI. We speak of warp *and* woof, for we know nothing of cloth that is all warp or all woof. There must be a warp in order to a woof. There could have been no cross or counter working, had there not been a prior Divine working and Holy Substance to be crossed. It does not follow that the woof is essential to the warp. Or, whatever is necessary to a fabric of human manufacture, it is not necessary that the pure foundation-substance of nature, which is of God, should be crossed and overrun by foreign interference. It is

so crossed, but the strange weft was not necessary to God's virgin warp.

Nature is warp and woof, but the Kingdom of Heaven is one,—one whole, perfect, beautiful substance:—it is the golden, living warp of God, unadulterated by diabolical working and admixture. Or if the woof be there, the original Divine warp is in the ascendant, and the woof is subject, and perfectly passive.

VII. To carry out the figure of a garment, you must look upon universal nature as the garment of God,—as the coarse, outermost, temporary garment of God. Let no one regard this as a mere figure, for *it is a truth* that God wears nature. Yes, nature!—foul as it is, rent as it is, portioned out among thieves and murderers as it is,—God wears it. And nature is full of the powers and virtues of Him Who wears it: even as Christ's virtues rayed forth from His Person to the hem, or extremity of His garment.

VIII. Herein is the very ground and secret of the Incarnation,—namely, that God had always worn, and will always wear nature, as a man weareth his garment. Because nature *was* His garment, He did not hesitate to come in the flesh, literally wearing, His garment. By no figure of speech, but really and truly He bore our griefs and carried our sorrows, and the iniquity of us all was

made to meet on Him. He suffered the very Divine Substance to be crossed in Himself by nature's woof, that He might take captive and wholly subjugate it by His own Eternal Warp. "Great is the mystery of Godliness,—God manifest in the flesh." If the Divine Nature has suffered itself to be crossed by nature, how much more shall nature be crossed by the Divine Nature! If, through the cross, and under the cross, of nature's flesh and blood, Christ died, how much more shall nature die, under her cross of the Divine Holiness in Christ! The cross-working powers of darkness were strong and mighty, and cost Him an exceeding great agony of conflict, but the underlying powers of Deity, which crossed *them*, were mightier. In Him the activity of nature's woof slept a deep sleep, it was crossed to death: the holy, eternal warp prevailed: Jesus, having for ever subdued nature unto Himself, sat down in the throne of God, waiting till that which was done in Himself should be fulfilled in the whole of His garment,—universal nature. "The priest shall burn that garment in the fire." Jesus is the High Priest both of nature and man: in Him human nature, which includes nature, was subjected to the Refiner's fire, until it became holy and glorious as God is Holy and Glorious. And the men of nature, and finally nature, must be baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire, in order to be made clean. The transfiguration of Christ, which is an historical



fact, is also a parable and prophecy which has a bearing upon all men and all nature. Whoso hath an understanding heart, let him understand: Our flesh in Jesus was transfigured *until it "shone as the sun,"* "and His raiment was white as the light,"—"exceeding white as snow,"—"and glistening."

IX. Until such a restitution of all things, the Cross is God's highest symbol, for God is crossed by His creation; and the cross is nature's highest symbol, for she is crossed by the Divine Nature and energy.

X. After "the end," when all things are restored to unity, the cross will give place to the circle, as the highest representative symbol.

XI. O men and brothers, the cross-working is in you, you know it is, the foreign, adulterous weft has wrought in you, supplanting your divine nature, and there are mighty powers striving to defend your adulterous nature against the Son of God, Who worketh in your better nature. For, though "dead" and "lost," the original warp of God is in you, and Christ in that; and, with your consent, He will work in you mightily, and bring about your regeneration. Not only give Him your consent, but your prayers and co-operation. Take up your cross and follow Him, and by carrying His cross He will in the end deliver you from your cross

nature ; and when your nature ceases to cross His nature, the Spirit of His Holiness will cease to cross you. Great salvation!—to be a creaturely circle, perfectly harmonious, both in your nature and working, with the great circle of God and Eternity.

XII. The four wheels which Ezekiel saw, under the God of Israel, representing the manifold circles of universal, creaturely existence, were yet ONE Wheel, one in spirit and in motion. “As for the wheels, it was cried unto them in my hearing, O Wheel!” Into such a Wheel will the whole fallen creation be resolved, under “the Cross of Christ.”

“O WHEEL!”

The Cross of Christ is the name of Truth, working in a degenerate world ; the Wheel represents Truth fully developed, when Christ shall be able to say of His whole work, what He has already said of His work in Himself:—“*It is finished !*”

## TRUTH IS THE KING.

[The same subject continued.]

WHEN Jesus stood a prisoner before Pilate, ready to be scourged, condemned, and crucified, He spoke of *His Kingdom*. Thrice in a single sentence He repeated the words: "*My Kingdom*." "Pilate therefore said unto Him, Art Thou a King then? Jesus answered, *I am a King*." Not a world-king: "*My Kingdom*," as I have just said, "is not of this world." The world hated Him and treated Him with every indignity. Clearly His Kingdom is *not* of this world. Yet His Kingdom is the one, only true, and everlasting Kingdom. The Kingdom of Truth alone *is*, every other is *not*. Christ "is the Truth, the Truth is King, the King "was made flesh and dwelt among us." Had the world been a true world, it would have known the King of Truth. But the world having fallen from Truth into specious untruth, how should the world know *Him*? The wisdom of men is folly with God, the Truth is foolishness with men: had they known the Truth, "they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory." What a sign it is of the world's

condition, that there was found to be no harmony, but very painful, and, indeed, unendurable disharmony, between the King of Truth and the men of the world. He expected no other lot under the sun, than to be contradicted and disallowed, despised and rejected. The cry, "Away with Him! away with Him!" did not disappoint Him, or make Him angry. The King of Truth carried in His heart a tender consideration, and indeed an apology, for the children of untruth.—"They know not what they do." He knew also that, owned or disowned, loved or hated, the Truth *is* King. "I *am* a King." He did not *become* a King. He could not cease for a moment to be King.

II. It cannot be otherwise. From eternity to eternity Truth is, and must be, King and Ruler. "The Truth" is "the True God." "God is love." The Son of God is "The Truth," or "The Word," "which is in the bosom of the Father." The Father is eternal, the Son is eternal. Truth is in Love as the Son is in the Father; Love is in the Truth as the Father is in the Son. "I and My Father are One." "I am in the Father, and the Father in Me." My Father is My authority, I am His Lawgiver. The Truth is King and Judge. "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." "Heaven and earth," in their present untrue form, "shall pass away, but My words shall never pass away." Everything

must pass away that is not according to truth. The Truth cannot pass away.

III. Remember "the warp and the woof." Christ is the warp of God, the true, proper, direct, proceeding substance, or Only Begotten of the Father. All holy and unfallen creations are in His likeness and image. But in this kingdom of time another image prevails, a strange woof is dominant. Truly it is the kingdom of *Time*. It is untruth's great effort, untruth exhibiting itself; but its days are numbered, it shall pass away. Such a creation *ought to be* temporal, and it *is* temporal. The dominancy of contrariness cannot endure. "Truth is great and must prevail."

IV. It was consistent that the world, which had overrun the Truth by its cross-work, should crucify Christ; for Christ is Truth. The crucifixion of the King of Truth is only the last, or extreme manifestation of the perverse working which obtains in nature and creature. Beyond this, untruth cannot go. It was permitted, before its *final* defeat, to go thus far, that heaven and earth might be taught its true quality,—that if suffered to work out its end, it would overthrow the throne of God, and annihilate Truth from the universe. The King of *Truth, crucified!* is the only mirror which reflects faithfully the character and spirit of "this present evil world."

V. Many prophets and kings, many contemplative and active men, both Jewish and Pagan, longed for the appearance of a "Faithful and True Witness." They longed for truth, and sought for it, but could not find it. The world did not witness to the truth about God or man. Now hear from His own lips the purpose for which God, as The Word, came forth from the Father and came into the world: "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the Truth." "The Faithful and True Witness" was not longed for in vain. The longing was a Divine affection in the heart of the world; it was the purpose of God, stirring beforehand, as a universal desire. One title, therefore, of Christ, the Incarnate Truth, is "The Desire of all nations." If the world had stood in the Kingdom of Truth, the Truth could not have *come* into the world. In His own Kingdom there is neither coming nor going. In the Kingdom of Truth the Truth is never absent.

VI. If the King of Truth came into a world in which truth was not, *His great act of witnessing to the Truth would be His own death.* In an untrue world He could not witness to the truth, but by dying out of it into His own kingdom,—the Kingdom of Truth. "My Kingdom is not from hence." In His agony before His death He reassures Himself, that to suffer and die were the very

purpose for which He was made flesh. "Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour: but *for this cause came I unto this hour.*" When He showed to His disciples "*that He must suffer and be killed,*" and in this way bear witness to the Truth, "Peter began to rebuke Him," declaring, "*This shall not be.*" Peter had no idea that this world was so adulterous, and so alien from the Truth, that the King of Truth *must* suffer in it, and die out of it, in order to witness to the Truth. But rebuke for rebuke. Worldly Plausibility had rebuked the Truth: hear the Truth rebuking Worldly Plausibility: "He turned and said unto Peter, Get thee behind Me, *Satan: thou art an offence to Me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.*" Peter spoke from "the wisdom of this world," and the love of natural life. He must have been greatly surprised to hear that the spirit of his fleshly prudence and affection was *Satan* in him. He knew not as yet, that (before its final baptism in fire) *Nature* is *Satan's* seat. How many persons are there, even now, who apprehend the broad distinction which Christ makes between the things which savour of men, and those which savour of God? Even Christians are very slow of heart to believe how far this world has swerved from Truth. The Cross of Christ is a sign unto the world, that the world is a Cross to the Divine Nature. In such a world the Truth could only be "a Man of Sorrows and

acquainted with grief." Ought not Christ to have suffered, and to enter into His glory?

VII. Never can we sufficiently admire the acuteness of the Divine Wisdom, which suffered this perverse world to apprehend and crucify "The Truth." For His crucifixion is the crucifixion of the world. Truly, the world "knew not what it did." It willed and meant to crucify *Him*, but it only crucified the world-form of His being, the flesh and blood of nature. But the world's form of life being put to death in Him, He became not only the Truth in His Divinity, but Truth in the form and substance of His flesh. In Him the world passed away and became the kingdom of heaven. In Himself the old enmity is slain. In Christ Jesus, all things in earth and all in heaven are reconciled to God. By pouring out His soul unto death He hath brought in Eternal Peace. When He laid down the life which He received from Mary, the ~~Eternal~~ Life (finding His Humanity wholly divested of nature's life) entered into it, and raised it, no more a natural body, but a glorious and Divine Body,—no more a form in the world, or according to the world, but a form in the Kingdom of Truth and according to Truth.

VIII. "If any man hath ears to hear let him hear." "*Every one who is of the Truth heareth My Voice.*" The Truth in man will hear the Truth



speaking in Christ. If the life which is according to nature's order and limits prevail in him, he will close his ears to Christ, and contradict Him. He will contradict Christ because the worldly form of life, which he has fallen into, is a constituted contradiction of "The Life of the Son of God." No one hears Christ, or if he hears Him, he understands Him not, until he has learnt to contradict himself and to renounce "his own life." If he discover not that temporal nature is at fault, he will never seek to be constituted according to eternal nature. This is the Cross, that a man allow the Life of the Son of God in him, to have authority over his own life. Christ, the King of Truth, therefore, couples together the hatred of our own life and the bearing of His Cross. "If any man come to Me, *and hate not his own life*, he cannot be My disciple. And whosoever doth not *bear his Cross*, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple."

IX. But from the day of man's fall unto this hour, Christ, as "The Truth," has been in him, if he would hear His voice. "The True Light" shineth, more or less, within every man that cometh into the world. Otherwise he would be utterly the child of hell, and irredeemable. In the selfsame day that Satan entered into our first parents, Christ also entered, that not only they, but everyone of their race, might have the possibility of choosing between the false lord and the True, between Baal

and God. Therefore, Paul affirms that among the heathen there are those "who do by nature the things contained in the law. These not having the law, *are a law unto themselves.*" "As many as sin without the law also perish without the law," and that justly; "because the work of the law is written on their hearts." Now this law, viz. the Spirit of Truth, which is "in the mouth and in the heart" of all men, is Christ in them. But only those are "*of the Truth*" who submit to the Truth. The guilt of mankind consists in having the Truth within them, and yet being *of the Wicked One*. Their hearts are too gross to feel the motions of Truth, their ears too dull to hear the voice of Truth, and their eyes closed to the Light of Truth. To all such Christ says: "*Because I tell you the truth, ye will not believe.*" They put darkness for light, and light for darkness. They are in miserable bondage to the world, to themselves, and the devil; and yet they have the conceit of being free. "We were never in bondage to any man: how sayest Thou, Ye shall be made free?"

X. But *no one can be free who has not the authority of Truth for his freedom.* The world, fleshly reason and the devil, are a very great authority,—a very ancient authority, but they are not Truth. They may pronounce human nature free, but they only mock their captive. Man may wish and try to

believe their authority, and make a boast of his freedom, but the boaster is in chains.

The Truth is King of kings. The Truth is free, and Truth only. Truth gives its own freedom to the children of Truth. "The Truth shall make you free." "I am the Truth." "If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed." Freedom is the end of Truth's work in us. Absolute freedom is absolute blessedness.

XI. But *the process of being made free* is slow and difficult. We cannot be made free faster than we suffer ourselves to be brought out of all untruth. There is not only untruth in our thoughts and ways, but also in the substance and mode of our being. Bad fruit is a proof that *the tree* is bad. Hence between every man in the flesh and freedom, there is a very strait gate, a bitter cup, and a baptism into fiercely conflicting elements. Freedom is the end, crucifixion is the means. But as in view of "the joy that was set before Him," Christ "endured the cross and despised the shame," so also His disciple says: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Considered in itself, can anything be more painful and humiliating than for a man to be in the world, and yet crucified to the world? and can anything be more mortifying and wretched than for the world to be a constant cross to the creature

who is fitted by his nature for the world? What a sublime conquest has been gotten both over the world and his own nature, when a man is able to exult in this double crucifixion! But myriads of crucifixions are not worthy to be compared with the eternal heaven of human freedom which shall follow. Every Christian is "crucified with Christ," but it is in order that he may be also glorified with Him. The Christ-life is no sooner quickened in the soul than it begins to "crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts." The old man *must* submit to crucifixion, "that the body of sin may be destroyed." There is no easier path to liberty. There is no shorter way to Heaven. The new man is only possible on the condition that the old man is crucified. Between life in the flesh and life in Heaven there is one strait gate for the Captain and the men. Christ was made perfect through sufferings, so are His seed. Read the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah and the twenty-first of the Book of Revelation,—the one as means, the other as end. The sufferings of Truth are but for a moment, the Victory is for ever. "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

XII. How many earnest souls have longed, and grown old longing, to see the problem of this lower creation solved! and have at last retired from the subject in despair. This strange, this contradictory

creation ; this orderly disorder ; this ceaseless birth of beauty ceaselessly falling into the jaws of death ; this happy, awful wrong-life, yearning, and yet not finding how, to become right-life ; this would-be Paradise, this Golgotha ; this God-loved, Heaven-embraced world, this bedlam of devils and sinners, of sins and horrors ;—who can solve for us the problem of this anomalous creation ?

First, consider Jesus in His agony sweating blood, and afterward see Him “crucified, dead, and buried.” Secondly, consider “this same Jesus,” risen from the dead, and invested with the power and glory of the endless life. In these two you have the crisis of creation’s tragedy, and *the solution of her problem.*

In a world which was *according to God*, sacrifice, or self-denial, could not be a divine duty ; but in a world which is far more according to the prince of the power of the air, than according to the Divine Mind, sacrifice becomes the highest service which can be rendered to God. It honours and glorifies God in this way : it acknowledges that the world and mankind, *as they are*, are contrary to God.—O Holy Father, the substance of the world is not as Thy substance, the order of the world is not Thy order, the constitution of man is not according to Thy image. *Therefore* “I sacrifice myself.”—“I lay down my life, that I may take it again.” “I am crucified with Christ,” that I may also “reign in life” with Him for ever.

## AIDS TO THOUGHT

WE are the children of The Great King, but we were sold into slavery before we were born, and we know not the estate of the firstborn. As if the children of her Majesty should sell themselves into slavery, without knowing what slavery is, in the hope of improving their condition :—so it was with God's firstborn of mankind. By their birthright they had dominion over all powers and elements ; but by the powers, which they should have held captive, they were taken captive.

Bitterly as her Majesty's children would feel the change, the next generation would have a very different sense of it. On hearing what their original condition was, it might kindle a wish in them that their parents had been wise enough to keep their first estate. To the *later generations* of the royal children the state of slavery would be *quite natural*. They would hardly be able to conceive that their normal or original natural condition was so widely different from that into which they were born. This is the case with mankind. They are a late generation, and they have not an idea of what their original

condition was. It is so long since the glory departed from them, that they know not in what their royalty consisted. The unnatural is become so natural to them, that they have a far stronger inclination to remain as they are, than to undergo a re-birth in order to be restored to their first estate.

It is fortunate that this strange country behaves so ill to them, or they would never inquire for the royal homelands. It is a good thing that in their new and fallen condition they sicken and suffer. It is a good thing that the elements of nature, which have got the mastery over them, often oppress and scourge them, and in the end deprive them of all the goods which they have lusted after. It is a good thing that, in this cruel house of bondage, the final recompense which the powers that be confer on their devoted slaves is to turn them into dead clay. Were it not for hard usage, the foolish slaves would never be weaned in heart from the land of Egypt.

As our bread grows out of the unlikely earth, in spite of a long conflict with nights and storms and frosts ; so are the heirs of Heaven growing and forming within the house of corruption, in spite of hard conflict with the world, the flesh, and the devil. Look at your wintry flower-roots and think what beautiful children lie hidden in dark houses.

The complete man can belong *in spirit* to no sect, just because he belongs to all; for he gleans from all in order to make his harmony.

In whatever fields you sow your seed, in those, and in no other, will your harvest grow.

You can have no heaven after death of which you have not sown the seed before death. Keep a strict watch over your thoughts and affections, over your imaginations and wishes, for according to their character is the character of the demons or angels that keep you company. With what spirits your soul is associated in the body, into the hands of the same will you fall when you are loosed from the body.

Remember that all devils are overcome "by the Blood of the Lamb." Neither can angels in Heaven, nor sinners on earth, overcome by any other Blood. "The Blood is the Life." "My Blood :—drink ye all of it."—All the evil powers in the universe are powerless before Absolute Innocence.

Cultivate Humility, Contentment, Simplicity, Innocence, Resignation, Patience, and the like, and evil spirits will find no rest in you; but the meekest, holiest, and sweetest of the angels of God will be drawn towards you.

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The world *saw* Christ, yet "*knew Him not.*" Some thought Him a "deceiver," others "mad," others a "blasphemer," others "a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber," others "a good man," and a "prophet;"—a few believed Him to be "The Christ," "the Son of God." To those who loved Him most and knew Him best He was an Enigma. Two or three had an occasional glimpse of His glory. To the multitude both His sayings and Himself were uncomprehended and incomprehensible parables. As it was with the Incarnate, so is it with the Written Word of God.

The Written Word, like the Cherubim, has but its feet on the earth; by its wings it flies in Heaven and soars above all the angels. Mortals read it, archangels cannot comprehend its height and depth. God, the Word, dwelleth in the Cherubim, and shines forth from them. They are not the Word, but a creaturely symbol of His manifoldness, and of the diversity and unity of His administration. If the creaturely symbol be too manifold, complex, and bewildering for us, how much more the Scriptures, which are a revelation in human language of the Word Himself!

But mark this peculiarity of the Divine Writings, which of itself sufficiently argues their Divinity.—Every reader, whatever view he take of them, a simple or a critical, a superficial or a profound, a natural or a spiritual view, feels, while reading, that there is a gaze upon him, as of Divine Eyes.

The man who cannot bear the Divine Eyes must shut the Book and run away.—Even then he finds the Holy Eyes before him, looking him in the face ; or if he look behind, the same Eyes are following hard upon him ; or if he close his eyes and strive to forget their too searching, too piercing gaze, the Eyes of the Word are open *within him*. “The Word is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” The impatient and restless anxiety of disbelief to get rid of the Divine authority of the Word, is *very strong evidence* of its Divine authority.

## BE MEN

**MORE** than *Men* you cannot be ; and if you are less your own nature will never forgive you. To be *men* is both your first duty and your first privilege. It would comfort your guardian angels, it would satisfy God to see you *men*. The great reason why you are discontented with your position and circumstances is that you are not *men* in your circumstances. Were the single purpose and aim of your soul to become *men*, you would be conscious of the strong sympathy of all Heaven, you would inherit sovereign authority from the Brotherhood of Christ, you would have confidence towards God. Hell would tremble at your presence, and the first of the holy angels would feel themselves honoured in being your servants.

II. Some quit themselves very respectably, with admirable dignity and ease, yet scarcely like *men* : —more like a well-bred, well-fed, polished race of princely manikins. Were there a show of them, there are few sights on earth so well worth seeing, but, weighed in the balances of Humanity, they are

found wanting. To be the pink and aristocracy of *man-animal* is a very great distinction, but to be *man* is a Divine distinction.

III. A number, whose name is legion, quit themselves like *tradesmen*, trade being the master and man the servant,—trade my lord, and man my lord's valet. The wonder is how trade has acquired its supremacy. How could man come to be so deluded as to neglect *himself*, for the sake of mind-ing trade? Trade is not more important than man, but man is infinitely more important than trade. Man may gain by trading and at the same time lose more than he gains. He may gain silver and gold, houses and lands, and lose spirituality, truth, and simplicity.—Is not this losing by trade? He may gain the world by trading, and lose himself.—Is not this losing by trade? Much trash acquired, but *the man* lost!—Who can estimate the loss involved in that man's gain? This is a trading world, but since *man* is the trader, he should be careful so to use trade as to become more a man thereby. He should never sell himself to the low methods of trade, for by so doing he makes *himself* lower. If sacrifice must be made, what man in his senses would not rather sacrifice trade to high-toned humanity, than his high-toned humanity to trade? Where is the profit of gaining in pocket and losing in soul? Does he not lose his labour, who gets money to put into a bag that hath holes? Man's own *immortal nature*

is the only safe bag into which his gains can be put. Profit in trade is lawful, but as man derives his profit from *his brother man*, he must make a conscience of profit, or his profit will be at the expense of his own humanity. To undersell a neighbour in an article which already pays too small a profit, is dishonest. The man who is guilty of the practice not only plots a design against the trade of his neighbours, but damages the character of trade in general. He means to get on thereby, but he takes out a stone from the building of his own character. Diligence and manly skill in the management of business are commendable, but all trickery ensnares the trader more than the public.

Be *men*! Beware of the tyranny of trade. Beware of its hold on your spirit. Let it be very much *without* you, that, when you have done with it, it may not leave its mark on you. Are you hunted with the idea of making your fortune by trade?—hunt the hunter out of your soul. Make to yourself the fortune of the wisest, broadest, noblest, bravest humanity that you can. Be *men*! Do you envy those who are rapidly outshining you in worldly circumstance and splendour? Envy them not. Compare the outside wages of slavish devotion to the world with the essential wealth and glory of a divine humanity.

IV. Some quit themselves as upgrown children, never as *men*. Their souls are never delivered from

their tutors and governors. Their educational prejudices cleave to them through life. They never violate the limits *within which* they were taught to think. Under the authority and to the extent of their leading-strings they can go, but no farther. They regard *freedom* not as "the perfect law," but as lawlessness. They are men-duplicates:—*Men* they can never become.

V. Some are little more than the parrots of their newspaper editor. From him they receive week by week the direction, substance, and measure of their thoughts. *Before* he has spoken they have no opinions; *when* he has spoken their opinions are coined, and immediately put into free circulation.

VI. Others quit themselves as religious machines, or as the parrots of their church, or their minister. Very unalterable machines they are; or if parrots, very pious parrots. Their knowledge of God, of their own souls and of the truths of Revelation, are not *their knowledge*. The traditions which they have received to hold relieve them from the difficulty of acquiring a personal faith. When they speak they speak from tradition, and not from their understanding. With all their getting they get, not understanding, but the verdict of other men's understanding. If they hear Christ, or a Christlike man, whom the Truth has made *free*, they stumble, because he speaks not in the words

of their tradition, but in the words which the fresh, living Spirit of to-day teaches. Under a truly human, unfettered liberty of speech, they know not their own doctrines. Christ certainly speaks with great force and authority, but then He speaks not as *their* Scribes and Pharisees speak.

VII. If you are in England, you will find multitudes on multitudes who quit themselves as *Englishmen*, before you meet with a dozen who know what it is to be *Men*. The height of their ambition is to be *Englishmen*. England is their greatest idea. In body and soul, in feeling, thought and speech, the "*freemen* of England" are the *slaves* of their Idol. Warm fires burn in all English homes, but cold water flows all round England, and shuts her in within herself. Men who are warmly sympathetic with themselves, but unsympathetic towards foreigners, may be *Englishmen* indeed, but they are not *Men*. If Russians, Germans, Frenchman, Americans, Scotchmen, *Englishmen*, could give their Humanity a high and sovereign dominion over their Nationality, they would become true brothers, with a strong treaty of peace grounded in their spirits and flowing in their blood. But so long as high and sovereign dominion is given to Nationality over Humanity, Brotherhood will be *talked about*, and Peace-treaties *made*, but the grand central law of Brotherhood and Peace will be distant still.

VIII. The want of the times, the want of the whole world, is *Men*. When will the age of *men* come? The age of *men* would be the Gospel of the Grace of God to all mankind. For nothing less than the descent of the Divine Humanity into human souls will make *Men*. The crown of all the ages has been seen in vision, and it cometh, yes, and it *will* come, in which the dominion, glory, and kingdom of the whole world are to be given to "One like *the Son of Man*." "*All* people, nations, and languages," long divided and distracted, "shall serve *Him*: *His* dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and *His* kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." The age of true Humanity is the golden age to come. "Come, Lord Jesus."

IX. How refreshing it would be to find even a small company of *men*! I do not even mean *patriotic* men, but *Men*. Patriotic men of one nation will rise up against the patriotic men of another nation. Between patriotic men "there will be wars and rumours of wars;" but let the nations of the world become *men*, and "wars shall cease unto the end of the earth." In unity there is no war. Oh for *men*!—Men not held by custom, nor influenced by votes of millions, nor cowed by words, nor coloured by that, nor shut up within the other, but *Men*. It would do your eyes good to see them, it would do your ears good to hear them, it would



do your lungs good to breathe in their atmosphere, it would do your understanding good to be inspired with their freedom, it would do your heart good to rest in their broad charity. God's "commandment is exceeding broad," and it is one.—Be ye *men*! for to be *men* is to be in His own image and likeness.

X. Man has unknown powers; but Samson is gone to sleep in the lap of Delilah. Worldly ease and pleasure have made a prey of him. His true manhood is quiescent, fallen into a deep sleep. His Divine strength is gone. He is sold into captivity to his own inclinations, and they, Philistines as they are, have put out his eyes and made him a slave in their mill. It is strange, it is passing strange, that man's little world-nature should be able to captivate his great eternity-nature. It is the woman prevailing over Samson, a man a thousand times stronger than herself. The world, having subjugated the Divine powers of man, is served by one who is greater than a thousand such worlds.

O *men*! *men*! you can imagine the strong man asleep in the lap of the fair Philistine. But can you imagine your own sleep in the lap of this plausible tempting world? More delusive than sleep is that world-wakefulness, in which *the man* sleeps. Physically and psychically the man is awake, but spiritually he is in a deep sleep. His world-powers are acute and active, but his God-breathed nature is sunk into profound stupor. The man is there,

but he is not himself. The true human power is not in him, the true human wisdom is not in him, the true human purpose is not in him. He is the world's and not God's. Till he become God's, he cannot be a *man*.

O men! men! will you not cry to be delivered from this wretched inanity? Read the first chapter of Genesis and ask God to make you *men* once more, —masters of all devils and of the world, friends and fellows of angels, sons of God,—*Men*. Resolve to be real men, insist upon being *real*. You know not to what posts God will call you, when He finds you *real men*. There would come to be enough of majesty and authority about your person and presence, to confound a whole cityful of unreal men.

XI. Be *real* men, and *The Kingdom of Truth will espouse you*. Mighty powers will not only express themselves in your words and works, but hide themselves in your silence. Be *real* men, and even your solitude will be waited upon with scenes greater than all the theatres of Europe ever represented, or can represent. The eye of the world hath not seen, nor hath the ear heard, nor hath the world's heart conceived, what "The Spirit of Truth" will reveal to you. • *Men* carry so much greater shows in themselves, they go not to the world's shows. Manikins go, because they are manikins, and not *men*. Be *real* men, and a *sublime object will*

*become a necessity to you.* You will not be able to sell your soul for a mess of pottage. The solar system, with a baptism awaiting it in tenfold stellar brilliance and magnetic influence, might sooner be diverted from its course, than you be tempted to make this world's money, place, or pleasure, your end. The world-god will find that he must make the most of his art with *others*, he would lose his time with *you*. The Almightyness of Man, as it is in Christ, he knows, and if you become the *real* men of Christ, and in Christ, he will know you too, and no more think of making you his prey than of trying another battle with Michael and his angels. "Jesus I know, and Paul I know." The one only calling of all *real* men is an eternity of free devotion to their King and Country;—God is *their* King, the universe *their* Country. Delight enough, honour enough, without their seeking, wait upon them, and will wait.

XII. "*Quit you like men.*" The ~~grand~~ purpose of mortal life is to make the end. ~~If~~ you use wisely and well the years of your brief night-time in nature, *what an end* you may yet make! What a character! What an inheritance! You cannot make the end at the end. The end will be made then. The work of the past ~~is~~ in you, in your being and character. You cannot enter upon eternity with any other humanity than time has formed. "The night is far spent, the day is at hand," the

Great Day. "It is high time to waken out of sleep." The formative time is shortening, the time for the manifestation of what is formed is nearing. The formative process is far advanced. Death is the soul's birth, when what has been formed in secret will be shown openly.

See to it, that death, which will bring final night to your flesh, be the opening of Day to your soul. Christ is the glory of God, or Essential Day: hide *Him* within you, and look to the day of your death for the rising of your Sun. The life of the flesh is only possible, on the condition that the glory of the Eternal Kingdom is strongly shut out. The wholeness of nature is the eclipse of glory. With the ruin of nature dawns the Day of days.



